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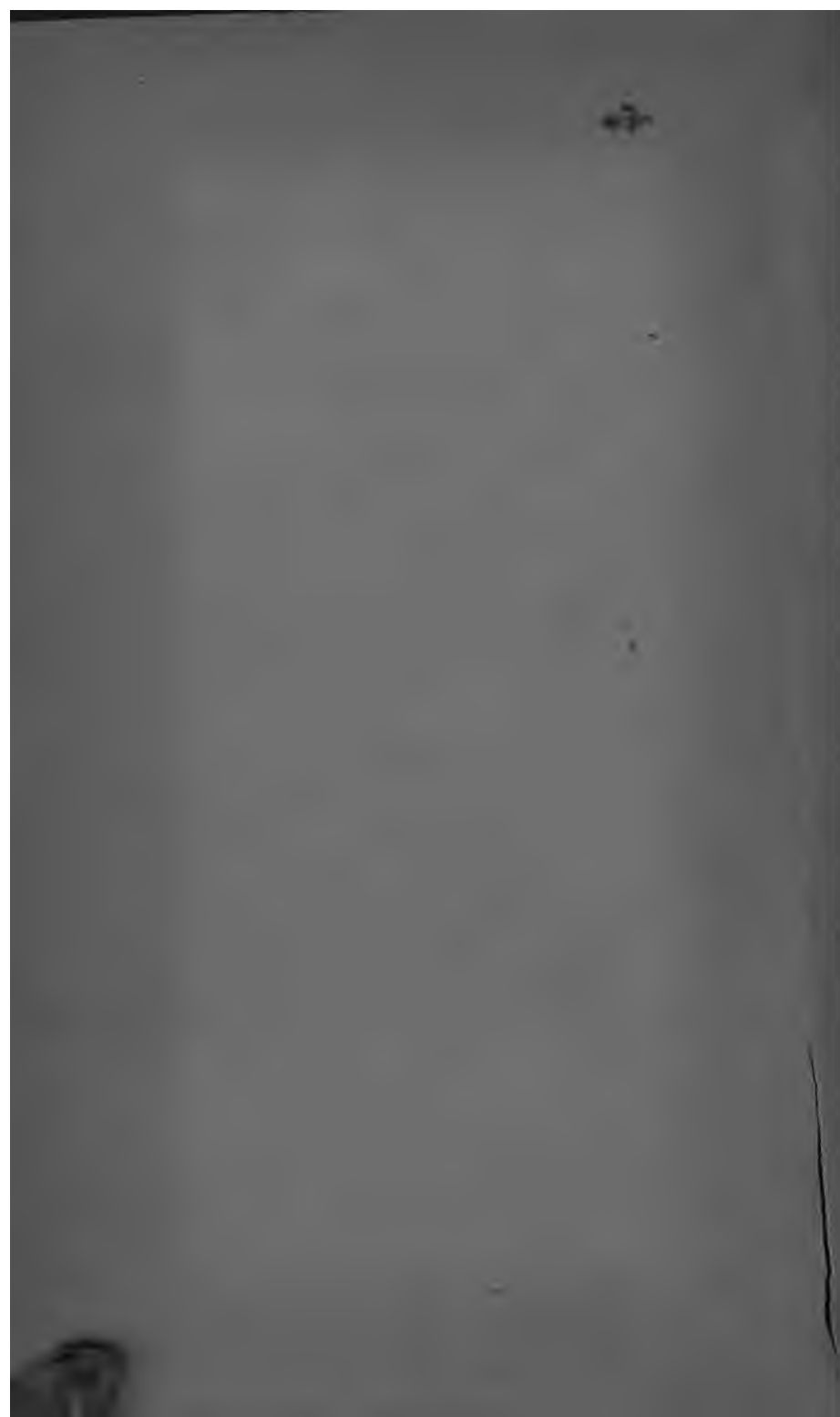
Blood and gold in South Africa.

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Blood and Gold in South Africa :

AN ANSWER

TO

DR. CONAN DOYLE :

*Being an Examination of his account
of the "Cause and Conduct" of the
South-African War.*

BY G. H. PERRIS,

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*Author of "A Short History of the Hague Conference," "The
Life and Teaching of Leo Tolstoy," &c.*

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—THE BOER HUNT BEGINS	3
„ II.—GOLD AND GRIEVANCES	18
„ III.—THE BRITISH CONSPIRACY: FIRST PHASE— THE PLOT AND THE RAID	32
„ IV.—THE BRITISH CONSPIRACY: SECOND PHASE— THE CAMPAIGN OF THREATS	41
„ V.—THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR	60

HOOVER WAR
COLLECTION

AN ANSWER
TO
DR. CONAN DOYLE.

I.—THE BOER HUNT BEGINS.

WITH a great flourish of trumpets there has lately been issued, through two of the leading London publishing houses, what claims to be a statement of the British "case" in regard to the South African War, from the pen of the creator of "Sherlock Holmes."* A first glance through the pamphlet did not move me to take it seriously; but the friend who gave it me as "a finger-post to show the way to salvation"—a man whose independence and capacity I respect—seemed to regard it as a convincing document, and others tell me that it will certainly have a wide influence. Three hundred thousand copies are said to have been printed already, and Lord Rosebery has given £50 to assist the production of foreign editions. That an appeal should be made for funds for its translation and circulation throughout Europe matters comparatively little; our first concern—one too large for our limited energies—is with our own people. Moreover, while the foreign Jingo, like the native Jingo, will keep his prejudices against every argument, the foreign humanitarian is moved by considerations of which Dr. Doyle seems to have no appreciation, and upon which, therefore, he can have no influence. It is, indeed, only when we come to see the peculiar bias of the argument that we realise to the full the absurdity of offering such a dish as this to foreign

* *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct.*
By A. Conan Doyle. Smith, Elder & Co., and George
Newnes, Ltd. Pp. 156. 6d.

readers. It is not without hesitation, then, that I set out upon a detailed examination of this defence of the war and its authors, for our time, and space and energy are sadly limited. Both writer and readers are likely to tire before the end can be reached, but enough will have been said to shake the confidence which Dr. Doyle claims, and his thousands of readers in this country seem ready to yield to anything bearing his name.

The Flotunist as Historian.

This examination will only deal with details, since it will be sufficient for the purpose to show that the pamphlet is neither accurate nor fair. For a true history, more than accuracy and fairness in this narrow sense are required. I do not lay any stress upon the fact that Dr. Conan Doyle issued in the early stages of the hostilities a substantial attempt at history in which he treated the war as already over, though this blunder at least suggested kinship with the common Jingo journalist. Perhaps it is unjust to apply the standards of serious history to the making of a case in *medias res*. Dr. Doyle has never, any more than Mr. Kipling, given us any ground to expect that he could or would write sober history. All the historians are on the other side of the hedge, along with the international and constitutional lawyers, the economists, and the better half of the poets, preachers, and *belle-lettrists*. There was no need for Mr. Quiller-Couch, Mr. Zangwill, or "Edna Lyall" to leave the field in which they have earned so many honours while trained hands like Mr. Frederic Harrison, Prof. Bryce, and Mr. Courtney, to say nothing of Mr. Hobson, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Methuen, Mr. Herbert Paul, and many another were at work, and when Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Goldwin Smith, and Mr. John Morley had given their opinion. It is impossible not to feel some pity for a Ministry which has to trust for its defence to a man whose achievements, however good in their way, all lie in the domain of popular fiction.

The pamphlet consists of eleven chapters—two historical, two on the Chamberlain-Kruger negotiations and contemporary points, one on the peace negotiations, five on the conduct of the war, and one of "conclusions"—together with a brief

preface, in which the author thus demands a favourable verdict: "I do not think that any unprejudiced man can read the facts without acknowledging that the British Government has done its best to avoid war and the British Army to wage it with humanity."

Queer Title-Deeds.

The most significant thing about the historical chapters is the continuous omission of essential facts. But we are met at the outset by an expression of opinion which will enable any discerning reader to locate Dr. Conan Doyle. ("In all the vast collection of British States," he says, "there is probably not one the title-deeds to which are more incontestible than to this [Cape Colony]. Britain had it by two rights—the right of conquest and the right of purchase" (p. 10). Here is a pretty judgment upon the Empire, by one of its sworn partisans! We hope the Australians and Canadians will like this insinuation that they are held to the Empire by no better "title-deeds" than conquest and purchase. If that be so, why prate of "rights" and "title-deeds" at all? There is no such thing as a "right" of conquest. Conquest is always and necessarily a wrong, as Englishmen used to be the first to declare when the sufferer was a Poland, a Finland, an Alsace-Lorraine, a Bulgaria, or a Slesvig. The conqueror does not require title-deeds, and he is usually content to leave his camp-followers to invent excuses for him. The so-called "purchase" was a meaner and no more rightful operation. The Stadtholder received a substantial bribe to reconcile him to the second British conquest; the Cape people were helpless and protesting victims. A pretty "title-deed" this! As well talk of the "right" of a man to sell his daughter, or buy another man's. In another of Dr. Doyle's similes the Cape territory is referred to as an accidental stake distributed at the end of a game of beggar-my-neighbour played by certain European Powers after the French Revolution. But no code of equity or law that has ever been drawn up recognises the right of monarchs to gamble with their possessions.

A False Analogy.

The only "flaw" which Dr. Doyle detects in these precious title-deeds is that they did not convey the hinterland along with the southern coast. "Were the discontented Dutch at liberty to pass onwards and found fresh nations to bar the path of the Anglo-Celtic Colonists?" No one at the time thought of asking a question of such preposterous arrogance; and if Dr. Doyle had any political imagination he would never have put it before his Continental and American readers. The Americans he thinks to placate by supposing a body of trekkers from New York setting up in California under an independent flag. The supposition is impossible, because the American Union grew out of the overthrow of a foreign conqueror, and grew, not by conquest but, as a federation based on liberty, equality, and fraternity, and could not have grown otherwise. If a distant parallel in the Western world be desired, it might be found by supposing that the "Loyalists" who refused to join the Union, and went north into Canada, had been followed up and pressed back and back on the ground that nothing must "bar the path" of the advancing Republicans. Dr. Doyle's hypothetical instance serves, however, to remind us of the only respectable kind of expansion. The United States grew by true colonisation—that is their great title-deed. But Dr. Doyle himself reminds us that it was not for fourteen years after the conquest that any current of British emigration to South Africa began.

Before leaving this first question of the conquest of the Cape let us note how differently an Imperial historian of recognised standing has treated it. After speaking of the success of the Dutch in the work of colonisation and the bargain between England and the Prince of Orange, Froude ("Oceana," Ch. III.) says that they had only submitted in 1806 "in the belief that, as before, the occupation would be temporary and that their country would be finally given back to them when the struggle was over." "They had made the country what it was, had set up their houses there, had done no one any harm, and had been in possession for seven generations. They were (now) treated as *adscripti glebas*," as mere serfs, "as

part of the soil. They resented it; the hotter spirits resisted. They were called rebels, and were shot and hanged in the usual fashion."

The Early Government of Cape Colony.

"If we had been wise," Froude continues, "we should have tried to reconcile the Dutch to an alien rule by exceptional consideration. We did make an exception, but not in their favour. We justified our conquest to ourselves by taking away the character of the conquered, and we constituted ourselves the champion of the coloured races against them, as if they were oppressors and robbers." Dr. Conan Doyle does not pretend to speak in the tones once familiar in Exeter Hall, but he claims, not only that the early government of the Cape was "mild, clean, honest," as well as "tactless and inconsistent," but also that the Imperial Government "has always taken" "a philanthropic view of the rights of the native," and that British justice is racially "colour-blind." On the latter point we may follow Froude in recalling, firstly, that "slavery at the Cape had always been rather domestic than predial; the scandals of the West India plantations were unknown. The slaves were part of the families and had always been treated with care and kindness." In the second place, the crime of the Dutch was simply that they were not converted as quickly as we were from an ancient reproach which had lain upon us much more heavily (as the chief slave traders of the world) than upon them. As to the character of the early government of the Colony, we need only recall that the rule which Dr. Doyle describes as "mild, clean, honest" included such acts as the abolition of the colonists' legislative and executive council and the substitution of the Governor's personal rule, the destruction of the independence of the High Court of Justice, the suppression of the Dutch language in courts of justice and official proceedings, though five-sixths of the people understood no other tongue, the abolition of municipal rights, the toleration of bribery in the administration, the enrolment of Hottentots as soldiers and police, and their use in enforcing civil process—a form of "colour-blindness" which Dr. Doyle's readers in the Southern

States of America will appreciate. Perhaps Dr. Doyle will suggest that the British Government is even now acting as "friend and protector of the native servants" by employing them on the battlefield. Yet he sees that the events culminating at Slagter's Nek opened a long feud between two white races. He thinks, unjustly, we hope, that the South African Colonies would not have abolished slavery of their own will. He admits, too, that "a brave race can forget the victims of the field of battle, but never those of the scaffold"—having himself forgotten Lotter, Scheepers, and the rest—and that "the making of political martyrs is the last insanity of statesmanship." Alas! that this "last insanity" should so often have been repeated in South Africa.

From Pillar to Post.

After these admissions our advocate can find no more inspiring parallel for the great Boer trek than the migration of the Mormons! Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the Governor of the Cape at the time, was more generous when he reported that the trek was caused by "the insecurity of life and property occasioned by recent measures, inadequate compensation for the lives of the slaves, and the despair of obtaining recompense for the ruinous losses by the Kaffir invasion." The trekkers, he said, were "a brave, patient, industrious, orderly, and religious people; the cultivators, the defenders, the tax contributors of the country." The trek was, in fact, one of the heroic episodes of history; and, as Froude said, its history "repeats our own history wherever we have settled in new countries inhabited already by an inferior race." Dr. Conan Doyle does not lack courage, but he would not have dared to compare any body of English pioneers with the Mormons.

We now come to the establishment of the Boer Republics. With infinite labour the emigrant farmers fought their way north and east. "The Boers had occupied Natal from within," says Dr. Doyle, "but England had previously done the same by sea"—an inaccurate as well as an inadequate summary. The Boers had been settled for years between the Drakensbergs and the sea, had established towns and constituted themselves

a Republic, before the British Government in a fit of insane jealousy sent a force round by water and ultimately seized their country. "It was only the conquest of Natal by the Boers which caused them (the British Government) to claim it as a British colony." What a confession for an Imperialist pamphleteer to have to make before a self-summoned European audience! While finding it "difficult to reach that height of philosophical detachment which enables the historian to deal absolutely impartially where his own country" is concerned, Dr. Doyle concedes that in regard to these events "there is a case for our adversary." But all the tale of wrong does not prevent him from regarding with satisfaction the fact that the Boers were "headed off from the sea," and their "ambition" was confined to the land. There has been nothing but grievances and exile so far; that blessed word "ambition" now makes an insidious first appearance. "Had it gone the other way a new and possibly formidable flag would have been added to the maritime nations." All the narrow-minded insolence of Imperialism is suggested in this sentence. One would really suppose that God made the sea for the exclusive pleasure and profit of Englishmen. These Boers had been conquered or bought, whichever Dr. Doyle likes, because a handful of officials in Whitehall thought this the best way of securing the route to India. They had been robbed of their political and social liberties because the said officials were still labouring under the infatuation that India is a more valuable asset than North America. They might fight wild beasts and savage tribesmen as long as they liked, but they must not found independent communities, and, above all, they must not dare to look upon the ocean, lest it should move them, as it has moved us, to ideas of liberty and culture, trade and travel, and mayhap, in some distant day of their demoralisation, of empire! The "title-deeds" of the Spanish Armada were, in fact, a veritable armoury of right as compared with those of Natal.

And still, if the hand of Imperial lust had gone no further, there might have been peace. Unfortunately persecution grows by what it feeds on. The Boer hunt proceeds. The Orange Republic, established in 1837, was invaded eight years later, and though the British troops were defeated and

forced to retire—"a futile resistance," says Dr. Doyle—the territory was afterwards effectively annexed. The resultant feud with the Basutos Dr. Doyle finds it convenient to ignore. Those were the days when we were attempting to apply Dr. Doyle's doctrine to the Russian Empire, and when England was beginning to learn in the Crimea its futility and costliness. In 1852, by the Sand River Convention, the absolute independence of the Transvaal was recognised—"against the will of a large part of the inhabitants" says Dr. Doyle, without offering a tittle of evidence—and two years later the Orange Free State gained the same liberty, becoming in the following forty-six years, as Mr. Bryce has said, "the most idyllic community in South Africa," and one of the most prosperous and healthy States in the world.

Progress "on Dutch Lines."

We have mentioned above some of the disabilities under which the Dutch stood in Cape Colony. It is amusing to note Dr. Doyle's view of the rectification which came about with the grant of self-government to the Colony in 1872. "The Dutch majority," he says, "put their own representatives into power and ran the government upon Dutch lines." Well, that is the way of majorities everywhere, and in this case there was a steady increase of prosperity. Moreover, Dr. Doyle might have remembered to record that the head and front of the "Dutch," or as we should more accurately say the Africander, policy and party at the Cape was, at the crucial time of "Outlander grievances," no less a person than the "Empire builder," Mr. Cecil Rhodes. "Already," Dr. Doyle continues, "Dutch law had been restored and Dutch put on the same footing as English as the official language of the country. The *extreme liberality* of such measures and the uncompromising way in which they have been carried out, *however distasteful* the legislation might seem to *English ideas*, are among the chief reasons which made the illiberal treatment of British settlers in the Transvaal so keenly resented at the Cape. A Dutch Government was ruling the British in a British Colony at the moment when the Boers would not give an Englishman a vote upon a Municipal Council in a city which he had built himself." Here is a truly pathetic picture—

the Africander Premier, Mr. Rhodes, in Cape Town, sitting upon an unfortunate British minority in the Colony, while the leading villain of the piece, President Kruger, sits upon a corresponding minority in the Transvaal. It all comes of the Imperial idea that an Englishman, however poor a figure he may cut at home, is suddenly and mysteriously endowed with the worth of a thousand of any other people directly he sets foot on a foreign shore. There are many little facts which clash with this desperate sketch of "a Dutch Government ruling the British in a British colony"—the gift of a war-ship to the Imperial Navy, for instance, and the almost superstitious loyalty to Queen Victoria. But on these and other points we may refer Dr. Doyle to his friend Mr. Cecil Rhodes, while we go back to the no less remarkable suggestion that there is some especial "liberality" in conceding self-government to a British Colony, and that majority rule is "distasteful to English ideas." There was, in fact, nothing at all of liberality in the grant of self government—given long before to Canada and most of the Australian Colonies—to the Cape. Let it be admitted that municipal self-government in Johannesburg was granted with still more regrettable reluctance. At least, there was good room for the plea of specially difficult and even dangerous conditions. No such conditions existed in England, yet at the moment of which Dr. Doyle speaks the agricultural labourers were still without the vote, London was groaning under a corrupt and incapable Board of Works, and even to this day the government of the City is unreformed, and thousands of working men are regularly disfranchised. Dr. Doyle speaks as if the vote were every Englishman's birthright. His personal experience may be fortunate; as, during fifteen years of continuous political work and steady residence, I have only been able to vote once for a Parliamentary candidate, I cannot share his unselfish faith.

Let me again contrast the facts as stated by the older with the summary of the newer Imperialist:

FROUDE.

DOYLE.

"With an exception which I shall presently notice, these treaties	"For twenty-five years after the Sand River Convention the
--	---

FROUDE.

(1852 and 1854) were observed for seventeen years, and *the land had rest* from its misfortunes. Our own border troubles ceased; the Colony was quiet and had no history; the new States did not sink, but prospered. The Boers . . . arranged their *disputes with the natives with little fighting*. In the Transvaal a million natives lived peacefully in their midst." ("Oceana," pages 41-2.)

DOYLE.

burghers of the Transvaal Republic had pursued a strenuous and *violent existence, fighting incessantly with the natives* and sometimes with each other, with an occasional fling at the Dutch Republic to the South. Disorganisation ensued." (Page 17.)

The Theft of the Diamond Fields.

The exception which Froude went on to describe constitutes one of many significant omissions from Dr. Conan Doyle's apologia—the theft of the Kimberley diamond fields from the Orange Free State. It should be said—it is another of Dr. Doyle's convenient omissions—that, after an interference in favour of the Basutos, the Treaty of 1852 was renewed in 1869 at Aliwal North, with fresh promises that there should be no further interference. But diamonds cover a multitude of sins. Says Froude: "The Dutch were expelled. . . . From that day no Boer in South Africa has been able to trust to English promises. The manner in which we acted, or allowed our representatives to act, was insolent in its cynicism. . . . We have accused" the Boers "of breaking their engagements with us, and it was we who taught them the lesson. . . . Our conduct would have been less entirely intolerable if we had rested simply on superior force—if we had told the Boers simply that we must have the diamond fields, and intended to take them; but we poisoned the wound and justified our action by posing before the world as the protectors of the rights of native tribes. . . . I had myself to make inquiries subsequently into the details of this transaction, *perhaps the most discreditable in the annals of English Colonial*

History." Froude did not find judicial impartiality so difficult as Dr. Conan Doyle confesses to have done. I fear that, impeccably orthodox as he was, had he lived longer he would have been denounced—perhaps assaulted—as a “pro-Boer” and an enemy of his country. But Froude’s honesty will be admired when the things Doyle remembered or forgot to say are alike lost in oblivion.

The annexation of 1877 brings us to another suppression. Our pamphleteer admits that the Boers were in no need of British intervention to save them. But, he says, “a formidable invasion was pending,” and so “Sir Theophilus Shepstone, after an inquiry of three months, solved all questions by the formal annexation of the country.” The fact is that news of the settlement of the dispute with Sekukuni arrived while the commission was still sitting; and the annexation was a gross breach, not only of the treaties, but of Sir T. Shepstone’s instructions. “There did not appear to be any strong feeling at the time against the annexation,” says Dr. Doyle. “A memorial against the measure received the signatures of the majority of the Boer inhabitants, but there was a fair minority who took the other view. Kruger accepted a paid office under Government.” The facts are different. The memorial—it is well to be exact—received the signatures of 6,591 out of a possible 8,000 electors (not inhabitants). Mr. Kruger used his great personal influence for peace and came twice to England, in 1877 and 1878 (surely this was worth mentioning, Mr. Doyle), to plead for the re-establishment of the Republic. For three years he kept the Boers in hand. It was in that interval (ten months before Majuba) that Mr. Gladstone declared that, even if the Transvaal were more valuable than it seemed to be, he would repudiate the annexation, because it was obtained “by means dishonourable to the character of our country.”

Dr. Doyle simply plays with the question. According to him there was no grievance on the one side, no greed on the other. The burghers only wanted a Volksraad and “an occasional cup of coffee with the anxious man who tries to rule them.” The Volksraad was not given (“simply through preoccupation and delay”); and Sir Owen Lanyon forgot the coffee. On the other hand

"Great Britain had no possible selfish interest in view"—why on earth did she persist then? was it sheer philanthropy?—"there was nothing sordid in the British action." Of course not, there never is! And so "every farmhouse sent out its riflemen," and the brief campaign that culminated at Majuba was fought — not that there was anything to fight about, but just for the fun of the thing!

Majuba—The Two Voices.

Dr. Doyle's treatment of the retrocession of independence to the Transvaal is a mean piece of shilly-shally journalism in which all the information necessary to a just judgment is lacking. What he calls the "surrender" of the Gladstone Government was "either the most pusillanimous or the most magnanimous in recent history." While refusing to credit its authors with any decent motives, he declares that the motive of the British people in acquiescing was "undoubtedly a moral and Christian one. They considered that the annexation had evidently been an injustice, that the farmers had a right to the freedom for which they fought, and that it was an unworthy thing for a great nation to continue an unjust war for the sake of a military revenge." As this was precisely the Gladstonian view, Dr. Doyle is trying to make out that that which is "moral and Christian" in the disciple is "pusillanimous" in the apostle. If he has really studied the South African question he must know that Mr. Gladstone could, even in his life-time, bring witnesses of the first rank to testify to the immediate practical expediency of his action.

I will only quote two of them. The first witness is no less a person than the present hero of Dr. Conan Doyle's defence, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, who spoke as follows at Birmingham, on June 7th, 1881 :—

"The Boers are not naturally a warlike race. They inherit from their ancestors—the men who won the independence of Holland from the oppressive rule of Philip II. of Spain—their unconquerable love of freedom and liberty. Are these not qualities which commend themselves to men of the English race? Is it against such a nation that we are to be called upon to exercise the dread arbitrament of arms? These men settled in the Transvaal in order to escape foreign rule.

They had had many quarrels with the British. They left their homes in Natal as the English Puritans left England for the United States, and they founded a little republic of their own in the heart of Africa. In 1852 we made a Treaty with them, and we agreed to respect and guarantee their independence; and I say, under these circumstances, is it possible we could maintain a forcible annexation of the country without incurring the accusation of having been guilty, I will not say of national folly, but I say of national crime?"

Mr. Chamberlain went on to say that Sir Evelyn Wood won a higher title to admiration and respect when he resisted the temptation of revenging a military disaster than if he "had entered the Transvaal in triumph over the bodies of the slain"—like Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener!

Our second witness is Lord Randolph Churchill, who said that while the Boers might have been beaten, the British Government "might indeed have regained the Transvaal, but it might have lost Cape Colony. The Dutch sentiment in the Colony had been so exasperated by what it considered to be the unjust, faithless, and arbitrary policy pursued towards the free Dutchmen of the Transvaal that the final triumph of the British arms, mainly by brute force, would have permanently and hopelessly alienated it from Great Britain."

Contrast this account of "Cape Politics" by the Conservative statesman with Dr. Doyle's assertion that the settlement "tested to the uttermost" the allegiance of the Colony, and that the people of the Cape and Natal, "members of a beaten race," felt themselves "humiliated before" their "Dutch neighbours." According to our Jingo pamphleteer, the Colonists have ever since harboured a growing resentment because the English people on "moral and Christian" grounds declined to act like a drunken bully. "The British Africander," he adds, "has yearned with an intensity of feeling unknown in England for the hour of revenge." If this be true, what are we to think of the British Africanders on whose behalf Dr. Doyle is arguing? If it is false, what are we to think of the author of a slander more infamous than any of those which he set out to refute? As to the British who are not Africanders, suffice it to say that revenge is a weapon that always breaks in the hand. In this war Majuba

has been "avenged" a score of times, and as often or oftener repeated. "These satisfactory results are very appropriate on the anniversary of Majuba," telegraphed Lord Kitchener the other day, reporting a great "drive" of Boers. Six hours later he had to cable that sixteen British officers and 451 men had been captured by the enemy; a few days later Lord Methuen was captured with four guns and many men. The path of the avenger is a difficult as well as a shameful one.

In a later chapter Dr. Doyle makes a half-hearted attempt to go back on these passages. Our soldiers, he says, have wished to avenge Majuba; that ancient mishap still "rankled in the memory"; but that it "swayed the policy of the country cannot be upheld." Granted! It was gold, solid gold, that "swayed the policy"; the thirst of vengeance only plied the spur. How far this base spirit prevailed may be judged from the fact that Dr. Doyle does not himself disavow or condemn it.

Suzerainty.

Dr. Doyle is undisguisedly contemptuous of the Conventions of 1881 and 1884. He says the former provided for a "vague suzerainty." The suzerainty was in fact strictly specific and limited. Lord Kimberley, as Colonial Secretary, said so in his instructions to Sir Hercules Robinson (March, 31st, 1881): "The term 'suzerainty' has been chosen as most conveniently describing superiority over a State possessing independent rights of government subject to reservations with reference to certain specified matters." Even if he had had any right to go behind the 1884 Convention, Mr. Chamberlain's effort to use the word "suzerainty" in a general sense could have had no authority whatever. As a matter of fact, the 1884 Convention, "in substitution for" that of 1881, was directly designed, as Lord Derby said, so that "your Government will be left free to govern the country without interference, and to conduct its diplomatic intercourse and shape its foreign policy subject only" to the power of the British Crown to negative foreign treaties. Dr. Doyle does not attempt to defend Mr. Chamberlain here. He protests that it is a "barren discussion." This trifling would be all very well were it not for the fact that the Colonial Secretary's obstinate insist-

ence upon a baseless claim, his refusal to put the question before a judicial tribunal, was the rock upon which the negotiations were ultimately wrecked. But for this threat—at first veiled, and afterwards open—the two Governments would never have come within measurable distance of war. Why did Mr. Chamberlain maintain—why was he allowed to maintain—a “barren discussion” if he and those behind him did not desire to provoke a yet bitterer conflict?

Whether or not Great Britain was “tricked and jockeyed” into accepting the Convention of 1884, as Dr. Doyle says, matters not a fig. The limited suzerainty was definitely abandoned. As Mr. Chamberlain himself said on May 8th, 1896:

“We did not claim, and never have claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The rights of our action under the Convention are limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce.”

Such, in his own words, is the principle, the betrayal of which by Mr. Chamberlain is the immediate cause of the South African War.

There is no need to labour the point any further. As I have written so much and only reached the end of Dr. Doyle’s first chapter, I will content myself by pointing out that he does not even seek to prove that Great Britain had any treaty right to interfere, except by friendly representation, in regard to the subjects which afterwards appear as the *casus belli*. The legal “case” for the war, therefore, goes against him by default.

In what follows, accordingly, it should be remembered that there is no better legal ground for British coercion of the Transvaal Government than, say, American miners in the Klondyke and the Washington Cabinet might have against the Canadian Government, or British concessionaires and our Foreign Office might have against the Governments of Russia and Turkey, or even of Germany and France.

has been "avenged" a score of times, and as often or oftener repeated. "These satisfactory results are very appropriate on the anniversary of Majuba," telegraphed Lord Kitchener the other day, reporting a great "drive" of Boers. Six hours later he had to cable that sixteen British officers and 451 men had been captured by the enemy; a few days later Lord Methuen was captured with four guns and many men. The path of the avenger is a difficult as well as a shameful one.

In a later chapter Dr. Doyle makes a half-hearted attempt to go back on these passages. Our soldiers, he says, have wished to avenge Majuba; that ancient mishap still "rankled in the memory"; but that it "swayed the policy of the country cannot be upheld." Granted! It was gold, solid gold, that "swayed the policy"; the thirst of vengeance only plied the spur. How far this base spirit prevailed may be judged from the fact that Dr. Doyle does not himself disavow or condemn it.

Suzerainty.

Dr. Doyle is undisguisedly contemptuous of the Conventions of 1881 and 1884. He says the former provided for a "vague suzerainty." The suzerainty was in fact strictly specific and limited. Lord Kimberley, as Colonial Secretary, said so in his instructions to Sir Hercules Robinson (March, 31st, 1881): "The term 'suzerainty' has been chosen as most conveniently describing superiority over a State possessing independent rights of government subject to reservations with reference to certain specified matters." Even if he had had any right to go behind the 1884 Convention, Mr. Chamberlain's effort to use the word "suzerainty" in a general sense could have had no authority whatever. As a matter of fact, the 1884 Convention, "in substitution for" that of 1881, was directly designed, as Lord Derby said, so that "your Government will be left free to govern the country without interference, and to conduct its diplomatic intercourse and shape its foreign policy subject only" to the power of the British Crown to negative foreign treaties. Dr. Doyle does not attempt to defend Mr. Chamberlain here. He protests that it is a "barren discussion." This trifling would be all very well were it not for the fact that the Colonial Secretary's obstinate insist-

ence upon a baseless claim, his refusal to put the question before a judicial tribunal, was the rock upon which the negotiations were ultimately wrecked. But for this threat—at first veiled, and afterwards open—the two Governments would never have come within measurable distance of war. Why did Mr. Chamberlain maintain—why was he allowed to maintain—a “barren discussion” if he and those behind him did not desire to provoke a yet bitterer conflict?

Whether or not Great Britain was “tricked and jockeyed” into accepting the Convention of 1884, as Dr. Doyle says, matters not a fig. The limited suzerainty was definitely abandoned. As Mr. Chamberlain himself said on May 8th, 1896:

“We did not claim, and never have claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The rights of our action under the Convention are limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce.”

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II.—GOLD AND GRIEVANCES.

The title of the second chapter is "The Cause of the Quarrel," and the first word is the exactly appropriate keynote—"Gold." Dr. Doyle admits that some of the "adventurers" who flocked to the Rand were "very much the reverse of desirable"; and then, after reminding us that the class of mining called for was that of large capitalist companies rather than of small individual enterprise, he rushes pell-mell into a grossly exaggerated account of Uitlander grievances. He forgets to mention the gold "slump" of 1889 and 1890 as a cause of discontent; he forgets a hundred things, and is sure only of one—the utter, gratuitous, hopeless wickedness and imbecility of the Boers. Now, adequately to refute Dr. Doyle's list of charges would require a larger booklet than his own, because he is content to utter bald libels without offering a tittle of evidence in support, a short, if not very convincing, way of dealing with your antagonist. I shall take only the two or three chief headings of the indictment, and for the rest refer the reader to witnesses who, from every point of view, deserve much higher credence than Dr. Doyle.

Grievances—Taxation.

The first of the "very real and pressing grievances" which "darkened the whole lives" of the Uitlanders was that "they were heavily taxed, and provided about seven-eighths of the revenue of the country," which, "through the industry of the new-comers, had changed from one of the poorest to the richest in the whole world (per head of population)." Why did not Dr. Doyle explain that the Transvaal taxation of most commodities was considerably less than in Cape Colony or Natal? Or he might have given a comparison with Rhodesia. "The Gold Law of the Transvaal," says Mr. J. A. Hobson ("The War in South Africa," p. 87), "is the most liberal in the world, taking no more than 5 per cent. out of the admitted profits of mining, or if we look at the output of 1898, taking one-seventieth of the total value of gold got in the year. Compare this with the Gold Law of Rhodesia, where the Chartered

Company has been accorded the right of taking as much as 50 per cent. of the net profit of any prospector who finds a purchaser for his claim."

Again, I notice that at a meeting of Rhodesia, Ltd., in July, 1900, Mr. R. J. Price, M.P. (Chairman), said "he believed that in a short time the Chartered Company would find it necessary to make some modification in their terms. *Thirty-three per cent.* was too large an amount to pay them, and the consequence was that every day new enterprises were retarded or nipped in the bud through this heavy imposition." Dr. Doyle is very simple if he thinks Mr. Rhodes would be an easier landlord than Mr. Kruger.

If Dr. Doyle wants to be finally satisfied that the gold grievance was an impudent pretence, he may refer to a long article in the *Times* (February 25th, 1902), in which the future of the Transvaal Gold Law is discussed. There he will find that in the Boer law of 1899 "the precedents apparently followed were those of the British law of Klondyke and the law of Rhodesia," the latter of which, as has been said, gives the government much higher powers. "It is true," says this Jingo writer,

"that the laws were passed by the Volkraad with the intention of putting money into the pockets of the burghers out of the gold won from the soil by the Uitlanders. But, in real fact, they have that effect in hardly any case, as, all over the Transvaal, the Boer farmer has sold his gold rights to one or other of the great mining corporations."

Dr. Doyle does not offer any reason why, if the goldfields constitute seven-eighths of the money wealth of the country, they should not bear seven-eighths of the taxation. In this country the Crown would have confiscated the mines; in an ideal Commonwealth the State would have taken them over and sent the invading capitalists packing. What an outcry there would arise in this country if the wealth of its greatest industry was drained off almost wholly to foreign shareholders! Imagine an American trust buying up our railways and shipping all the profit across the Atlantic. Would we be content with 5 per cent. taxation? I trow not. "The blood was sucked from the Uitlanders," says Dr. Doyle. Notwithstanding this sad fate, in August, 1899, the market value of the Wernher, Beit concerns stood at over seventy-six millions ster-

ling; and twenty Rand mines distributed dividends in the three years preceding the war amounting to over eight millions sterling, an average yearly dividend of 33 per cent. It is to vindicate these gilded martyrs, the helots of Park Lane, that Dr. Doyle's friends in Whitehall have mortgaged for many years to come the resources of a people thirty per cent. of whom have been proved to be living permanently below the poverty line! Mr. Hobson has shown quite frankly, and with the skill of a trained economist, how a radical reformer would have dealt with the finances of the Transvaal. Reforms were already being made, and would have been completed in course of time. Joubert, who died early in the war, Schalk Burger, the present Acting President, and Botha, hero of a hundred fights, were all progressive Boers, advocates of reform, and opponents of Mr. Kruger, though Dr. Doyle does not think the fact worth mentioning. But under any honest system of finance the goldfields would have had to pay rather more than less. The worst fault of the Kruger Government was that, suddenly faced by the strongest financial combination which the modern world has produced (with the possible exception of some American "combines"), it lacked experience, and had only rough principles of justice to apply to a situation of immense difficulty. In any case, a war the mere interest on the money cost of which (as far as it has now gone) the whole public revenue of the Transvaal would not suffice to pay, is a queer way of remedying a taxation grievance.

The Franchise.

But, we are told, as the second count, the Uitlanders "were left without a vote Such a case of taxation without representation has never been known." The obvious facts that have "never been known" to Dr. Conan Doyle would make a substantial library. Has he never heard of the greatest ironworks in Russia, Yusovo (*i.e.*, Hughes-town), built up by British Uitlander capital and labour in spite of every possible disability and obstacle, political, social, and economic? There are probably many more Englishmen in Russia than there were in the Transvaal, and not only have they not a single vote among them, nor any

right of meeting, nor any freedom of speech and publication, but their very persons are not safe from agencies notoriously unscrupulous and hardened in all manner of extortion and villainy. What about British concessionaires, merchants, and artisans in Turkey, and in nearly all Asiatic countries? How many British Uitlanders in Germany, France, Austria, or Italy, ever get or ask for a vote? Nay, let us try to put aside the hypocrisy and cant that do so easily beset us, and ask where and when the vote was made the birth-right of an Englishman. I have spoken before of the tardy and partial extensions of our home franchise. Probably not one-half of the sane adult men (none of the women, of course) of England have a vote for the House of Commons, and the House of Commons itself is openly flouted by the Upper Chamber for which no one has a vote, and by the Cabinet which, for long periods together, is practically irresponsible. The Prime Minister is frankly in favour of excluding aliens, and the Lords endorsed his opinion in July, 1898, by 86 to 36 votes. The vote is not given to aliens in this country as a right at all, but only—after a qualification period of five years—as an optional concession. For a Government the chief members of which have obstinately opposed franchise extensions at home to pose as their advocates in a foreign goldfield is a peculiarly gross fraud upon their uninformed constituents. A half-a-dozen of these men have lately committed the people of England and the Empire, without saying so much as "If you please," to an offensive and defensive alliance with an Asiatic Power that may easily land us in a war from which we should not recover. To talk of the vote as an accepted right in face of these facts is either very stupid or very hypocritical.

Some of the Uitlanders were more frank than their advocates. "As for the franchise," said Mr. Lionel Phillips, of Eckstein & Co., "few of us care a fig for it." Those who did care were for the most part those who intended to try to accomplish the aim of the Jameson Raid, as Mr. Cecil Rhodes cynically declared, "by constitutional means." Dr. Doyle should read, if he has not already done so, Mr. Phillips's letter to "My dear Beit," the wealthiest of the South African

millionaires, whom he represented in Johannesburg, dated from that place on 16th June, 1894 ("Arbitration or War?" F. Parker and Others, p. 39). "As you of course know," he said, "I have no desire for political rights, and believe as a whole that the community is not ambitious in this respect." It even preferred to be voteless, and—a point which Dr. Doyle carefully omits to mention—free from the burgher's obligation of military service. Bribery and coercion, not normal political agitation, are the favourite weapons of the new finance. But for the conspiracy which the leaders of the Johannesburg crowd were then hatching, they would have got a liberal franchise long ago.

As it was, the Raad passed (on July 19th, 1899) a franchise law reducing the qualification period to seven years, enfranchising at once all nine years' residents and all native-born adult children of aliens, requiring only five years more from two years' residents and giving the Goldfields four more seats in each Raad. The Government afterwards offered to reduce the franchise further to five years, with ten seats out of thirty-six in the Volksraad. Dr. Doyle admits (p. 31) that, with a five years' franchise, there would never have been any war, since "grievances would have been righted from the inside without external interference." The admission is fatal, for Mr. Chamberlain had no better ground for refusing to accept the offer of a five years' franchise, which Dr. Doyle says would have righted everything, than that the power of external interference, which Dr. Doyle says would then be unnecessary, must be maintained at any cost. The fact is that Mr. Chamberlain had then gone too far along the road of violence for it to be pleasant to draw back. He knows better to-day, and the man in the street begins to see the cost of not knowing how to wait.

Promiscuous Slanders.

Feeling, perhaps, the impossibility of representing this franchise difficulty as a "very real and pressing grievance"—for he has to admit that "the Uitlanders were not ardent politicians"—Dr. Doyle seeks to strengthen it by pouring out phrases of contumely worthy of the Johannesburg reptile press upon the heads of the Boer administration.

They were "a most corrupt oligarchy, venal and incompetent to the last degree." They "fleeced" their victims "at every turn," and met them "with laughter and taunts." They were "men of the worst possible character," "ignorant bigots, some of them buffoons, and nearly all of them openly and shamelessly corrupt." I need not refer back to some orthodox opinions on Boer character already cited or quote others in answer to the pages which Dr. Doyle defaces with this cowardly clap-trap, for the events of the last two years afford the best answer. Thousands of captive Britishers owe their lives to the humanity and wisdom of these brutal and corrupt buffoons, who, for all their ignorance, have been able to withstand the strongest military force ever got together in human history, and have not lost their *morale* in the process. I will not yield to the temptation of comparing the Kruger oligarchy with the Cecil oligarchy, the average Boer with the average Uitlander. On a later page Dr. Doyle himself says that "in contests of wit, as of arms, it must be confessed that the laugh has up to now been usually upon the side of our simple and pastoral South African neighbours." It would be putting it too mildly to say that the Boers have nothing to lose by such comparisons; but, however effective, they tend to throw into the background the main fact, which is that Dr. Doyle is attempting to justify a bloody and disastrous war by levelling vague charges of ignorance, stupidity, and corruption against what Mr. Chamberlain described, just after the Jameson raid, as "a foreign State in friendly treaty relations with Her Majesty." This is, in fact, the colouring matter and residuum, the mud that sticks, in every "case" for the war; and Dr. Doyle is only "going one better" than other Jingo scribblers when, in illustration, he reports (no authority given, as usual) one member of the Raad as opposing pillar-boxes in Pretoria because he never wrote letters himself, and another as opposing measures against locusts on the ground that they were a scourge sent by God to punish the sins of the people. We do not know whether this report is an Uitlander concoction or not. What we do know is that if the Boers were ten times as stupid, ignorant, inefficient, and corrupt as Dr. Doyle alleges, the fact would

furnish no *casus belli* against "a foreign State in friendly treaty relations" with us.

Put Yourself in Their Place.

This would be recognised even by the most belated Tory if we could only get him for a moment to try the golden rule of putting himself in the other man's place. Let us suppose an ideal State as much greater than Britain as Britain is greater than the Transvaal; and let us suppose this greater State to be looking down contemptuously upon our infirmities. Take a few infirmities as they are stated by one of our most popular writers at the present moment:—

"The House of Lords is a collection of obsolete territorial dignitaries fitfully reinforced by the bishops and a miscellany (in no sense representative) of opulent moderns; the House of Commons is the seat of a party conflict, a faction-fight of initiated persons that has long ceased to bear any real relation to current social processes. The members of the lower chamber are selected by obscure party machines operating upon constituencies almost all of which have long since become too vast and heterogeneous to possess any collective intelligence or purpose at all."

After an account of the "ridiculously obsolete" procedure of the House of Commons, Mr. H. G. Wells, whom I am quoting, continues:

"The same obsolescence that is so conspicuous in the general institutions of the official Kingdom of England, and that even English people can remark in the official Empire of China, is to be traced in a greater or lesser degree in the nominal organisation and public tradition throughout the whole world. The United States, for example, the social mass which has, perhaps, advanced furthest along the new lines, struggles in the iron bonds of a constitution that is based primarily on a conception of a number of comparatively small internally homogeneous agricultural States, a bunch of pre-Johannesburg Transvaals."—"Anticipations," pp. 100-101.)

All this sounds very bad, and so it is; but what should we or the United States say if these things were taken up by some hypothetical Higher Power as a *casus belli*, a justification for all the monstrous evils of a war of conquest?

Some Utklander Testimony.

Those who really wish at this time of day to read a close, frank, and impartial examination, of the grievances, actual and alleged, by a political

economist of established repute, may find it in Mr. J. A. Hobson's "The War in South Africa."

I will quote only two or three typical Uitlander witnesses. Mr. J. Crothers, of Burnley, a tradesman returned from the Transvaal (quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*), says:—

"The grievances are almost entirely manufactured. The laws of the Boer Government, as a whole, are quite as good as those at home, if not better, and the mining laws are the best in the world. I lived twelve months in Johannesburg, and have been nearly all over the mining district, and I was never once insulted by a Dutchman. The discontent is simply a question of the rich men getting richer at the expense of the poorer classes. I believe if a ballot were taken of the English working men on the Rand, the majority would be in favour of a Dutch Government."

Mr. Ratcliffe, of Acregate Lane, Preston, who returned on the eve of the war, said that not half of the signatures to the franchise petition were genuine, and to his knowledge the names of men were signed who had been dead for two or three years.

Captain March Phillips, of Rimington's Scouts, formerly himself a Uitlander, says:

"As for the Uitlanders and their grievances, I would not ride a yard or fire a shot to right all the grievances that were ever invented. The mass of the Uitlanders (i.e., the miners and working men of the Rand) had no grievances. I know what I am talking about, for I have lived and worked among them. I have seen English newspapers passed from one to another, and roars of laughter roused by the *Times* telegrams about these precious grievances. We used to read the London papers to find out what our grievances were; and very frequently they would be due to causes of which we had never even heard."

Here is a more recent testimony, that of a man who scorns Pro-Boers and approves of the war on general Imperialist grounds—Mr. Ben Bowen, "late of Rhondda Valley, now of Kimberley" (*Western Mail*, February 11th, 1902):—

"For ten months I have done my utmost, with as unbiassed mind as possible, to examine things for myself. The Uitlander grievance, to say the least, has been exaggerated. But who and what was the Uitlander? A man who wanted as much money as possible out of the country in as few years as possible, and then to pack up and clear. Who in England is prepared to allow the destiny of our nation to rest in the hands of a German band? Let the truth be admitted. I have met many Uitlanders. Ninety-nine per cent. of them frankly admit that they had no grievance, and were, in fact, as contented as ever. The late Transvaal Government was the working man's boon. Bear in mind, at the same time, that the working man who felt it a boon at all was simply a machine, employed in South Africa for some time, and then removed, maybe to England, either to rest or rust. The average Uitlander wanted 20s. or 25s. a day—nothing else."

Mr. E. B. Rose, an Uitlander, who was president of the Labour Union in Johannesburg on the eve of the war, has written a pamphlet (*Morning Leader* office, 1d.) in pursuance of a suggestion of Mr. Herbert Spencer, making a detailed comparison of the constitution and laws of England and the Transvaal respectively. He thus sums up :—

“ We have enumerated thirty-one points, having reference to matters political, military, economical, and social, every one of great and many of supreme importance ; and in the vast majority of them we find that from the democratic standpoint not only is the Transvaal abreast of England, but very far ahead. And it would certainly be impossible to name an equal number of matters of equal importance wherein Great Britain and its constitution and laws are in advance of the Transvaal. . . . It may be said without the least exaggeration that in destroying the nationality of the Boers, the British Government is engaged in destroying the nearest approach to essentially democratic government that probably the world has ever seen—certainly that exists at the present time.”

The Naked Issue.

In these and many other quarters there is at least solid evidence to set over against Dr. Doyle's unsupported statement that the Boers “ have stood for all that history has shown to be odious in the form of exclusiveness and oppression.” This sort of vague abuse will not convince anyone, least of all the Continental readers for whom Dr. Doyle's pamphlet was chiefly written, at this time of day. It smacks too much of the lying telegram about the women and children being in danger, foisted upon the British public on the eve of the Jameson Raid by the friends of the Johannesburg plotters.

Dr. Doyle forgets that lies and slanders are the familiar milestones of the road which he has chosen to travel. He makes the mistake of supposing that all the people can be fooled all the time. He knows that the man in the street cannot check one by one his bold asseverations ; but he under-estimates the force of a few main considerations which—as is usual in the important issues of history—are sufficient, when firmly grasped, to lead even a simple mind to a right conclusion. One of these I have already indicated—the utter disproportion and unsuitability between the disease (supposing that there was one) and the remedy. This pamphlet is a defence not of a Jameson Raid, but of a war that has already cost hundreds of millions of money and scores of thousands of lives,

the end and final price of which no man can foretell. Dr. Doyle uses many exaggerated phrases, but he does not suggest that the Uitlanders' grievances cost a single life. He admits that there was a Boer reform party, that one-third of the Raad voted in favour of the reception of the Uitlanders' petition, and that the Uitlanders could, with a peacefully extended franchise, have got their way in a few years. He admits that the grievance did not arise till 1890, and he knows that Mr. Kruger's rule, which is the burden of his *apologia*, could not have lasted long.

He quotes Mr. Chamberlain's admission that in the Franchise Law of 1899 President Kruger had "accepted the principle for which they [the British Government] have contended," and the comment of the *Times* thereon that the crisis was over. Only questions of detail remained, and, says Dr. Doyle, "the difference of two years [in the franchise] would not have hindered its acceptance, even at the expense of some humiliation" to Sir Alfred Milner. "There was no very great gap between the parties" on the eve of the war. It all comes to this, then: we are to believe that Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy and the horrible conflict it brought about were preferable to a few months more of patient negotiation or a few years of patient waiting for a small community of gold-seekers. That is the real issue which these pages are written not to explain, but to conceal. If that issue could be put in its naked simplicity to the British electorate, or to any popular tribunal in the world, there can be little doubt what the verdict would be.

A Calculation and Another Test.

Yes! to any tribunal—even one of Transvaal Uitlanders! Many of them have been ruined by the war; but set that aside. Let us suppose ourselves back in the summer of 1899, with a knowledge of what the next two and a half years was to cost this country. Put the money cost at the moderate sum of three hundred millions sterling and the number of aggrieved foreigners at 50,000—five for every two who signed the famous petition—and you will see that it would have been cheaper to give every man Jack of them £6,000 down, or a perpetual pension of £200 a year, out of the British Exchequer, cheaper by 50,000 good

lives, than to let this infamy come about. A few odd millions might have been voted as a solatium to Mr. Rhodes and his fellow-capitalists, and what a gain the account would still show! This is one of those perfectly simple considerations which would outweigh every argument Dr. Doyle could bring, were he ten times more ingenious.

Here is another. There were Uitlanders of many nations, yet the British Government alone made representations to the Transvaal Government, the British Government alone pretended that the grievances were of an onerous character. Why was that? Dr. Doyle makes a hurried and feeble effort to answer. "The Continental Uitlanders," he says, "were more patient of that which was unendurable to the American and the Briton." A pretty plea to offer to a Continental audience—that that is endurable to a Frenchman, a German, an Italian, which is a *casus belli* for an Englishman! If true, what can be the use of appealing to Continental opinion at all? If false—

But let us take the case of our "Anglo-Saxon" cousins. "The Americans, however," says Dr. Doyle, "were in so great a minority that it was upon the British that the brunt of the struggle for freedom fell." This is simply childish. Is the United States Government wont to be indifferent to the robbery and oppression of its subjects when they are outnumbered by those of other countries? Are American subjects meeker than British under foul wrongs when they are in a minority? This matter is open to an easy test. There were thousands of Continental and American Uitlanders. As to the former—especially the Germans—all the evidence is against Dr. Doyle's case. The Kaiser's telegram to President Kruger, the formation of the Foreign Legion, and the universal sentiment of Europe are conclusive. As to the Americans, the evidence is of a more negative character, but it all points in the same direction. Can Dr. Doyle bring one American witness, except Mr. Hammond, who was one of the Rhodesian crowd, to support his account of the grievances? Can he point to a single representation by Americans to the American Government, or by the latter to the Transvaal? Two Presidents have refused to intervene on behalf of the Boers in this unequal struggle, because England had to be

paid for having refused to intervene on behalf of Spain; but the Boer delegates have been received in the friendliest way at the White House, and the overwhelming mass of American opinion favours the cause of the little republics whose independence we are trying to crush out.

The fact is that the witnesses, without whom Dr. Doyle could not prove his case, are against him almost to a man. Thousands of miners returned to the various Western countries at the outset of the war. If they had had any substantial wrongs in excess of the evils always attendant upon a cosmopolitan community of gold-seekers, every one of these countries would have known of them long ago. Dr. Doyle did not try to get the evidence of the returned English miners even—many of whom, indeed, have testified in the opposite direction. He preferred to hash up the scurrilities of the Rhodesian press. It is pitiful to see talent put to such misuse. England could only accept a "case" so concocted for lack of a better, as some poor salve to a stricken conscience. But it is ludicrous to suppose that foreign countries, to whom the facts have long been available, can be convinced in any such way.

The "Right" of Conquest.

Dr. Doyle never really relies on his own account of the grievances. Before it comes the cry "Avenge Majuba!" After it the plea of a "right of conquest," and after that again the right of Imperial interest to override every other consideration. If Dr. Doyle were not an utter amateur in politics it would be difficult to deal adequately with a kaleidoscopic argument like this. As it is, the lack of any firm foundation shows itself plainly in frequent and flagrant inconsistencies. "The Boers," he tells us, "held the Uitlanders down in a way which exists nowhere else upon earth. What is their right? The law of conquest? Then the same right may be justly invoked to reverse so intolerable a situation." This absurd proposition, we are asked to believe, the Boers "would themselves acknowledge." Let us overlook the fact that there is no more a "right" of conquest than a "right" of highway robbery; let us even overlook the fact that the Boer republics were

III.—THE BRITISH CONSPIRACY: FIRST PHASE—THE PLOT AND THE RAID.

Dr. Doyle does not enlarge upon his avowal of the real attitude of the British Government; and he regards a couple of pages of bald narrative, from which once more the essential facts are studiously omitted, as a sufficient account of the development of events between 1890 and the Jameson Raid. Let us try to get behind the curtain a small corner of which has been unwittingly lifted, before we resume our chronological analysis.

Dr. Doyle's general position (paragraphs 2 and 3 of "Some Points Examined") is that (1) this cannot be "a capitalists' war," because the capitalists did not want war, and because neither the British Government nor the British people would have been content to pull their chestnuts out of the fire; and (2) that it is absurd to say that "Britain wanted the gold-mines," because, in fact, the mines can give no compensation for the enormous cost at which they have been got. The answer to these cheap debating-society arguments lies on their face. The second is as though one should say that it is absurd to pretend that purchasers, say, of "The Hound of the Baskervilles," wanted a good story, because, in fact, they got a bad one. The war has proved a very bad story, a terribly disappointing adventure, a bitterly unremunerative investment; but Dr. Doyle cannot have forgotten that every one expected a walk-over for the British, and the capitalists' anticipations are down in black and white for anyone to refer to. Mr. C. D. Rudd said, "If it were true that the war was caused by capitalists or undertaken on behalf of the mines, the Empire owes them a deep debt of gratitude. . . . South Africa is not a dear asset to the Empire at the cost of the present war." The money cost of the war was, said Mr. J. B. Robinson, "of minor importance" compared with the "immense value" of the Boer territories. But these characteristic utterances of men who fight not, neither do they pay, date back to November, 1900, when the cost of the war was estimated at

only sixty millions sterling—say a tax of 8 per cent. on the estimated total future value of the Transvaal gold-fields. I doubt whether these men would say to-day that it was better to force on war than amicably to encourage reform.

In his first point Dr. Doyle jumbles up three parties whose interests were very different. As to the British people, they were, and to a large extent still are, simple dupes of the politicians and the capitalists. It is the part of these two latter classes which we must now try more exactly to ascertain; and in doing so we will set Dr. Doyle a good example by citing unimpeachable facts and testimony.

The "Helots" of Johannesburg.

And first for the capitalists. "We know now," says Dr. Doyle, "that the leading capitalists in Johannesburg were the very men who most strenuously resisted an agitation which might lead to war. . . . The agitation for the franchise and other rights was a *bond fide* liberal agitation started by poor men, employés, and miners, who intended to live in the country, not in Park Lane." A more scandalous mis-statement of historical facts I do not remember to have seen over the name of a responsible writer.

The Transvaal National Union, founded in 1892, has been described as, at the outset, filling the office of debating society on the Rand. Not till 1894 was there any serious franchise agitation. In that year occurred two incidents which Dr. Doyle does not think worth mentioning—the claim of the Transvaal (legitimate under the Convention) to commandeer Uitlanders for service in war against natives, and its abandonment, and the first interposition of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who, in a stormy interview with Mr. Kruger, threatened the latter that "he would lose his country unless he changed his mode of government." "Had Mr. Rhodes not interfered in Transvaal politics," says the *Times* correspondent in Pretoria, Dr. Scoble ("The Rise and Fall of Krugerism," p. 174), "the mining magnates would never have given a hearty support to the Uitlander cause." They now determined to exchange the policy of bribery for a policy of threats and, if necessary, of force. The lead was taken by the heads of the two millionaire groups

of Wernher, Beit, & Co. and the Consolidated Goldfields, who were the heads also of the two other chief money concerns of South Africa, the Kimberley Diamond Mines and the Chartered Company. Mr. Rhodes was at once Prime Minister at the Cape, Chairman of De Beers, Managing Director of the Chartered Company, and a most powerful member of the Consolidated Goldfields. From the date of the letter of Mr. Lionel Phillips, which has already been quoted—June, 1894—the agitation was subsidised and managed by these Rand capitalists. Mr. Charles Leonard, their legal adviser and confidant, became President of the National Union. "The fact is," says Mr. Fitzpatrick, a member of the Eckstein firm, in his "The Transvaal from Within," "that Mr. Alfred Beit, of the firm of Wernher, Beit, & Co., London, and Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Managing Director of the Consolidated Goldfields, may be regarded as the chiefs to whom the ultimate decision as to whether it was necessary from the capitalistic point of view to resort to extreme measures was necessarily left." After detailing the financial interest of the men already named, this writer continues: "Mr. George Farrer, another very large mine owner who joined a little later than the others, with the gentlemen named above, may be considered to have represented the capitalist element in the earlier stages of the Reform Movement"—the commanding element which Dr. Doyle suggests did not exist. "The other elements were represented by Mr. Charles Leonard, Chairman of the National Union, and one or two other prominent members of that body." The famous letter to Dr. Jameson, of December 20th, 1895, was signed by Messrs. Leonard, F. Rhodes, L. Phillips, J. H. Hammond, and G. Farrer. It specifically declared that "all the elements necessary for armed conflict" were in existence, and it guaranteed "any expense that may reasonably be incurred by you in helping us."

The Real Cause.

Dr. Doyle's pretence that the "Reform" movement was run by poor and pacific working-men being disposed of, we now give a more exact answer to the question of its real objects. The chief of these lay in the fact thus shortly explained

by the then editor of the *Johannesburg Standard and Diggers' News* :

"The time had arrived for the development of deep-level mining, and the great mining corporations recognised that the work could not be undertaken at a profit until a considerable reduction in the cost of working had been secured. Millions of pounds had been spent in sinking shafts and otherwise preparing the ground. Engineers of experience pointed out that at the existing cost of production these deep-level mines could not realise the values placed upon them. There were also certain rights over 'bewaarplaatsen' and 'unproclaimed' farms that the capitalists were anxious to secure . . . *The great question was that of cheaper production.* The hope was to secure the cancellation of all monopolies, to diminish whatever taxation bore directly upon the mines, to decrease white men's wages, and to introduce a modified form of the 'compound system' which prevailed in Kimberley and worked entirely for the benefit of the capitalists."—"Arbitration or War?" pp. 44-5.)

Further details of the economic basis of the Johannesburg conspiracy will be found in Mr. J. A. Hobson's and other books, and confirmatory evidence from the lips or pens of Mr. Hays Hammond, Mr. Rudd, Mr. Albu, Lord Harris (Chairman in London of the Consolidated Goldfields), Mr. E. P. Rathbone (Mine Inspector on the Rand), Major White, and others will be found in Mr. Ogden's collection of documents, "The War against the Dutch Republics." This evidence is unanswered and unanswerable. Dr. Doyle does not attempt the impossible; once more he finds the Levite's the easier way. But it is surely an insult to the intelligent reader to suppose that on a point of first-class historical importance it will suffice to cast the dust of mendacious generalities in his eyes. I confess it is very difficult to speak patiently of a "case" so conceived. Dr. Doyle might have taken a leaf out of the book of his hero, Mr. Chamberlain, who at least meets his opponents face to face.

Cheaper labour, black and white, "regulated" or forced in the case of the natives, reduced duties on dynamite, &c., increased taxation of agriculture, reduced taxation of the industrial community—these were the real objects of the Johannesburg conspirators and the cosmopolitan capitalists who directed and paid them. "Progress" and "good government" always meant for these men slave-labour. "With good government," said Mr. Hammond (November 18th, 1899), "there should be abundant labour, and then there will be no difficulty in cutting down wages. The Kaffir will

be quite as well satisfied—in fact, he would work longer if you gave him half the amount.” Mr. Rudd still more frankly, though in the name of “progress and the general prosperity of the country,” advocated the introduction of compulsory labour. And as those aims could not be attained under a Boer Government, the Government was to be forcibly upset. *Not*—mark!—to make the Transvaal a British colony, which would have been to create a still greater obstacle to their designs, but to deliver it up to the gang of whom Mr. Rhodes, with his dream of a “United” South Africa under his own dominance, was the chief. “It was a minority of the Uitlanders who had any desire to come into the British system,” Dr. Doyle confesses, adding very truly that “the majority of the British immigrants had no desire to subvert the [existing] State.”

Under Which Flag?

This annoying fact received rather ludicrous demonstration in the fiasco of December, 1895. The capitalists were quite ready—to pay the bill. Their lying message—charitably overlooked by Dr. Doyle—about the women and children being in danger was ready for appearance in the *London Times*. “Constitutional agitation was laid aside, arms were smuggled in, and everything prepared for an organised rising.” Alas and alack-a-day! The crushed and despairing Uitlanders—whose woes move Dr. Doyle to dithyrambic ire even at this late day, and whom he portrays as groaning over the loss of rights which are the heritage of every free-born Briton—wouldn’t rise! Why should they, indeed? Some of them had thought it worth while to sign the petition in favour of reforms. A tenth part of them could have captured Johannesburg—Dr. Jameson and his 500 roughriders had less than 300 Boers to deal with. The golden mountain was in labour—behold the ridiculous mouse! “The revolt at Johannesburg was postponed on account of a *disagreement as to which flag they were to rise under.*” For once Dr. Doyle does not suppress the awkward fact. It is true that at the top of the same page he had spoken of these men as naturally turning their eyes to the British flag, “which means purity of government with equal rights and equal duties for all men.” Why, in fact, couldn’t they agree to

proclaim that beautiful ideal when the crisis came? Why were Mr. Leonard, Mr. Hammond, and other leaders persistently Republican? Why did Mr. Leonard find it necessary to rush off to Cape Town in mid-crisis (December 25th) to report the dispute to Mr. Rhodes, and why was it decided to postpone the revolt rather than rise under the British flag? The answer is obvious. Johannesburg in the power of the Uitlander capitalists could make its own terms with the Boer Government; a British Johannesburg would be definitively amenable to London-made law and administration. The mining magnates wanted the Transvaal for themselves, not for the Empire, or for "pure government and equal rights." Only when they realised that, though the Uitlanders would not fight for them, England might be duped into doing so, was the centre of gravity in the question shifted from Cape Town and Johannesburg to London. And no sooner did the costliness of the policy of conquest appear than they began to threaten (*see. e.g.*, the speech of Mr. J. B. Robinson, Chairman of the South African Banking Company, on 2nd November, 1900) that if they are penalised they will raise fresh trouble of the old kind, even though the Government be British and not Boer!

The Chief Criminal.

In face of these facts, Dr. Doyle coolly observes of Mr. Rhodes—the chief manager of the plot—that "the motives of his action are obscure—certainly we may say that they were not sordid, for he has always been a man whose thoughts were large and whose habits were simple." If the matter were not of fundamental importance one might laugh this white-washing phrase off with a reference to the ballad of Ah-Sin, whose ways, his also, were "childlike and bland." The motives of Mr. Rhodes seem to me much less "obscure" than those of Dr. Doyle, who is taking these pains to set forth a purely cynical view of episodes which must excite the disgust and indignation of every fair and healthy mind. The conspiracy—rebellion and raid—is a thoroughly contemptible affair from top to bottom; to it is directly traceable the worst of the difficulties that afterwards arose. Yet Dr. Doyle is not moved even to echo the half-hearted condemnation of it and its authors which

every Jingo was prepared to utter at the time. Mr. Rhodes's plans were certainly "large," and his methods "simple"; but does burglary cease to be a "sordid" crime when it is carried out on a vast scale? Special Committees of the House of Commons and the Cape Legislature have put it on record that this man, to whom more than any other the woes of South Africa are due, promoted, with the aid of Chartered Company troops, an armed insurrection against what Sir Hercules Robinson, in his Raid proclamation, described as "a foreign State in amity with Her Majesty's Government," and whose "independence" it was his "desire to respect"; that Rhodes and Beit were the active promoters and moving spirit of the conspiracy, which he largely financed and controlled, both within and outside Johannesburg; that he could not escape from the responsibility, and that there was no justification for his conduct. It was proved at the inquiries that the attempted revolution cost Mr. Rhodes personally £61,500, which he paid on January 15th, 1896. The whole agitation was estimated to have cost not less than £250,000.

Four of Mr. Rhodes's tools—Messrs. Phillips, Farrar, F. Rhodes, and Hammond—pleaded guilty in Johannesburg, and, the death sentences being commuted, were mildly punished. The rest, having sworn that they never intended to jeopardise the independence and safety of the Republic, were let off with small fines. The raiders were sent home, and, as Dr. Doyle admits, "the chief officers were condemned to terms of imprisonment which certainly did not err on the side of severity." He cynically adds that of the bill for damages subsequently presented to the British Government, not a penny has been paid—not even compensation to the widows and children of the slain burghers. President Kruger's magnanimity is not denied. Mr. Chamberlain himself recognised it in so many words. If, in truth, Mr. Kruger had "hardened his heart" when he found the Colonial Office taking up the broken threads of the Uitlander conspiracy, who could have wondered?

But what of that other man of "large thoughts and simple habits," the chief criminal, Cecil Rhodes? Scornful of blame, safe from punishment in the security of the most luxurious mansion in

South Africa, he set himself to the elaboration of a larger, bolder, and more effective, if also a more costly, plan of campaign. Come to think of it, it is only poor men who will do other people's fighting for them without getting a share in the spoil. The Uitlanders were too comfortable, all the grievances notwithstanding. Now there's Mr. Thomas Atkins, on the other hand . . . ! Also he has the advantage of being a "constitutional means" . . .

The ground was already well prepared. The greater part of the South African press was already in Rhodesian hands; a large part of the press of London came quickly under the same influence. Gold and diamond shares had become a leading factor in the attitude of English Society. The Government was safe for years to come, Lord Rosebery having crippled the regular Opposition. All that was wanted was a Rhodes in the Cabinet. The man of destiny appeared in the figure of him who, in 1881, had vindicated the Boers and declared that the annexation of the Transvaal would be a national crime.

Enter Mr. Chamberlain!

Within a few months of his advent to the Colonial Office in July, 1895, Mr. Chamberlain had commenced the huge game of bluff, the development of which we have now to trace, with his ultimatum on the Drifts question; and at that time he had already made inquiry of the Rhodes ministry at the Cape as to the share they would take in a war with the Transvaal. Within three weeks of the Raid he cabled to Sir Hercules Robinson that he was considering the propriety of immediately sending a large force to the Cape to provide for all eventualities. The High Commissioner deprecated the idea, and it was shelved. But early in the following January (1896) Mr. Chamberlain was threatening the Transvaal Government that the danger from which they had escaped "may recur, though in a different form." These are incidents which Dr. Doyle does not think worth mentioning: he has nothing to say about the period preceding the Bloemfontein Conference—during which municipal self-government was given to Johannesburg and other reforms were effected—but that things were going from

bad to worse. We must try to get the facts into truer proportion and perspective. That the possibility of war resulting has been in view throughout the years of Mr. Chamberlain's aggressive and provocative treatment of the questions at issue is undeniable; but we may still conclude that, with the comparative insignificance of his adversary also in full view, he hoped to the last that bluff might be sufficient and bloodshed might be avoided. Mr. Rhodes may have entertained the same hope; in neither case does it mitigate their guilt as the chief authors of the war. Statesmen must be held responsible for the natural and probable results of the line of action which they deliberately adopt.

Always impressionable and impulsive, Mr. Chamberlain uttered, indeed, at the moment when the shame of the Rhodesian conspiracy was fresh upon us, a very remarkable prophetic judgment upon his own policy. It is in the light of these words, spoken in the House of Commons on May 6th, 1896, that the reader must interpret what follows :

"In some quarters the idea is put forward that the Government ought to have issued an ultimatum to President Kruger—an ultimatum which would certainly have been rejected, and which must have led to war. Sir, I do not propose to discuss such a contingency as that. *A war in South Africa would be one of the most serious wars that could possibly be waged. It would be in the nature of a civil war. It would be a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war. As I have pointed out, it would leave behind it the embers of a strife which I believe generations would hardly be long enough to extinguish. To go to war with President Kruger in order to force upon him reforms in the internal affairs of his State, with which successive Secretaries of State standing in this place have repudiated all right of interference, that would have been a course of action as immoral as it would have been unwise.*"

IV.—THE BRITISH CONSPIRACY: SECOND PHASE—THE CAMPAIGN OF THREATS.

We have seen that Dr. Doyle's appeal to British vanity on behalf of the Rhodesian plotters is merely a trick of political advocacy, because, in fact, the managers of the Johannesburg revolution did not want to exchange Boer for British institutions—they only wanted to turn the goldfields into an independent State under their own rule, and the movement failed because, while some Uitlanders would have liked direct British rule and many others were quite content with the Boer Republic, no substantial number were willing to fight to establish a capitalist system. A moment's thought will show that when once this situation was publicly revealed there remained, for politicians and capitalists alike, but two alternatives: a patient recognition of Transvaal independence, modified only by loyal agitation within and friendly recommendations from without, or a policy of threats leading up to a war of annexation. There is no third way, and it only remains to determine which road was actually taken. Dr. Doyle burks this simple question. He is writing for foreigners as well as Britons, and for them he knows that the plea of the superiority of British institutions would not be convincing even if it were pertinent. In a long passage opening his third chapter, he accordingly asks "our foreign critics" to believe that none in England wanted annexation, because the game could not be worth the candle.

"Whether the four-coloured flag of the Transvaal, or the Union Jack of a self-governing colony, waved over the gold mines would not make the difference of one shilling to the revenue of Great Britain. . . . While she is no gainer by the change, most of the expenses of it, in blood and in money, falls upon the home country. On the face of it, therefore, Great Britain had every reason to avoid so formidable a task as the conquest of the South African Republic."

This is the sort of wisdom that comes after a bitter experience. The sufficient answer is that if someone in authority had told the British people three years ago that such a war would entail such costs without any reward, there would have been no

war, even if Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Rhodes had been still determined to bring it about.

"There was no room for ambition or aggression. . . . One may examine the files of the Press during all the months of the negotiations, and never find one reputable opinion in favour of annexation."

An ingeniously-worded challenge! Reputable people were far from desiring to annex the gold mines; unfortunately this "fussy and faddy minority," as Dr. Doyle calls it a page or two later, was too optimistic; it gave "the man at the wheel" credit for too high motives; when it fully realised the peril, it was too late. But to show that in those financial, professional, and pseudo-aristocratic circles out of which our governing class are mainly recruited, annexation was openly desired—as a second best to the election of an Uitlander Raad and an Uitlander President—would be very easy. It will suffice to point to the reception of the Raiders in London, and the welcome of Mr. Rhodes by the Prince of Wales, our present King-Emperor. Much more to the point will it be to show that the British Government, in collusion with the chief of the Rand conspirators, deliberately pursued the aggressive policy indicated above, with the intention of securing, either by threats or by war, the complete surrender of the Boers.

Mr. Chamberlain's Complicity.

Just how far the collusion of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Rhodes extended it is at present impossible to say. The House of Commons Committee of Inquiry left behind it a secret, a mystery, of which, to interpret him in the most favourable way, Dr. Doyle knows no more than any other man in the street. Mr. Chamberlain would hardly thank him for this passage from the page in which the subject is dismissed:—

"That he knew an insurrection might possibly result from the despair of the Uitlanders is very probable. It was his business to know what was going on so far as he could, and there is no reason why his private sympathies should not be with his own ill-used people. But that he contemplated an invasion of the Transvaal by a handful of policemen is absurd."

Overlooking the ambiguity of the last sentence, we may ask what fundamental distinction Dr. Doyle can draw between the Johannesburg con-

spiracy and the Raid which was to assist it. Both were under the guidance of the same hands and had the same object. At any rate, we may start from this admission that Mr. Chamberlain probably knew of the Uitlander plot and sympathised with it. We know he did not attempt to stop it. Even if our information went no further than this, we should have ground enough to suspect every subsequent act of the man who directed the British policy. Dr. Doyle's only other contribution to the question is to choose out the two following telegrams sent by Mr. Rhodes to London from the matter subsequently revealed, and to claim that they show, not complicity, but only an attempt to force Mr. Chamberlain's hand :

"Inform Chamberlain that I shall get through all right if he will support me, but he must not send cable like he sent to the High Commissioner.

"Unless you can make Chamberlain instruct the High Commissioner to proceed at once to Johannesburg the whole position is lost."

Dr. Doyle might well admit Mr. Chamberlain's fore-knowledge! But how far is that from complicity?

Let me recall some other of the Raid documents. On 2nd November, 1895—nearly two months beforehand—Dr. Rutherford Harris, in London, telegraphed to his master, Mr. Rhodes, in Cape Town :—

"Very confidential. If you cannot carry out the plans of Dr. Jameson *have every reason to believe J. Chamberlain intends active policy* Imperial with intention to federation British sphere of influence in his way and he will expect you to adopt his views."

Two days later he reported :—

"I have already sent Flora to convince J. Chamberlain support *Times* newspaper. If you can telegraph course you wish *Times* to adopt now with regard to Transvaal Flora will act."

It was on this day that Mr. Fairfield, of the Colonial Office, after an interview with Dr. Harris, wrote to Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham :—

"You will see that events are moving rapidly in South Africa. Rhodes having accepted the responsibilities imposed on him is naturally keen to get the Protectorate question settled, and has been telegraphing all day to this end. . . . I said I would lay this before you ; in fact, *Rhodes, very naturally, wants to get our people off the scene, as this ugly row is pending with the Transvaal. That, I think, is also our interest.*"

On November 26th Dr. Harris cabled as

follows—the money reference is to the sum paid for the Pitsani strip, the “jumping-off place” for the Raid, the “Protectorate question” alluded to above:—

“ . . . Know there is great danger Phillips Leonard they can or may be doing business without assistance from British South Africa Company and also independently British flag it would have serious effect on your position here Flora suggests 16th December celebrate Pretoria District 1880. *I will try make best possible terms J. Chamberlain for £200,000 which I was compelled abandon that could only secure British position.*”

On December 12th, Miss Flora Shaw, a personal friend of Mr. Chamberlain, who paid frequent visits to the Colonial Office, telegraphed to Mr. Rhodes:—

“Delay dangerous. Sympathy now complete, but will depend very much upon action before European Powers given time enter a protest which as European situation considered serious might paralyse Government. General feeling in the Stock market very suspicious.”

And on December 17th:

“ . . . Chamberlain sound in case of interference European Powers but have special reason to believe wishes you must do it immediately.”

Ten days later Dr. Harris telegraphed to Miss Shaw that “everything is postponed. We are ready, but divisions at Johannesburg.” The capitalists are always ready, but there are times when poor, oppressed working-men fail them. Jameson and his four hundred men—the body of mounted troops, under British regular officers, whom Dr. Doyle calls a “handful of police”—blundered in, nevertheless.

To these imperfect revelations, two facts have to be added: (1) That further documents, said to be the most important of all, have been suppressed, though Mr. Chamberlain has been repeatedly challenged to produce them or prosecute his libellers, and though he has been openly threatened by Mr. Rhodes’s solicitor, Mr. Hawkesley, with their production if he attacked Mr. Rhodes; and (2) That, so far from making any such attack, he went out of his way, in face of the verdicts of the two inquiries, to make the famous white-washing speech in the House of Commons, in which he declared that “there exists nothing which affects Mr. Rhodes’s personal character as a man of honour.”

Here, then, are the main ascertained points as to

the British conspiracy for the seizure of the Transvaal: (1) The chief organiser of both Revolution and Raid was the British Prime Minister of a British Colony, to this day a member of His Majesty's Privy Council, and, with the possible exception of Mr. Chamberlain, the chief hero of British Imperialism; (2) Mr. Chamberlain knew in advance of the Johannesburg plot, and sympathising with it, did nothing to hinder it; (3) the agents of Mr. Rhodes, who frequently visited Mr. Chamberlain, believed him also to sympathise with the intended Raid, and to wish it to come off immediately; (4) with fore-knowledge that an attack on the Boer Government was preparing, he sold a piece of ground to Mr. Rhodes as an encampment for the Raiders, troopers of the Chartered Company under British regular officers; (5) the Raiders were let off with nominal penalties and became the lions of English Society, while Mr. Rhodes received marked consideration in the highest quarters, and was publicly defended by Mr. Chamberlain—who (6) has refused to this day to disclose more fully what happened, but has steadily pursued a policy of provocation consistent only with the supposition that his own aims were in substance identical with those of the capitalist plotters.

The "Africander Conspiracy" Myth.

Dr. Doyle's evasion of these facts would in any case put him out of court as a historian or a political adviser. It becomes more flagrant in view of his ridiculous attempt to revive the exploded myth of an "Africander conspiracy" as a final proof for his case. The six pages devoted to this experiment in the resurrection of dead slander open thus: "It would be a misuse of terms to call the general Boer design against the British a conspiracy, for it was openly advocated in the press, preached from the pulpit, and sustained upon the platform that the Dutch should predominate in South Africa, and that the portion of it which remained under the British flag should be absorbed by that which was outside it." The one definite point in these vague phrases is the disavowal of the word "conspiracy." The temptation is, however, too great; Dr. Doyle repeats the word which he has declared to be a

"misuse of terms" twice over, and with emphasis. "A huge conspiracy as to the future, which might be verbally discussed, but which must not be written, seems to have prevailed among the farmers," a "great conspiracy, not of ambitions" only, "but of weapons and of dates."

Now if, as Dr. Doyle says, South Africa had been for years rife with open sedition, how comes it that successive Governors at the Cape and in Natal had failed to report it to the Imperial authorities? How comes it that, while only nominal garrisons had been maintained, there was no outbreak? How is it that Sir Alfred Milner, reporting on the Jubilee demonstrations of 1897, could say that "racial differences have not affected the loyalty of any portion of the population to Her Majesty the Queen"? How is it that when war did break out, the Dutch majority at the Cape did *not* rise? To ask these questions is to explode the whole myth. I need not quote evidence in rebuttal—such as the fact that the Cape, under an Afrikaner ministry, was the only Colony to make a contribution to the British Navy, or the notorious and almost superstitious loyalty of the Dutch to Queen Victoria—because there is really no charge to rebut. Dr. Doyle supports his ludicrous assertion by four equally vague quotations, and these only. The old charge about the arming of the Transvaal Boers is not among these, so that I am spared from quoting for the hundredth time the reports of Captain Young-husband, Major Robert White and others, and the details of the Transvaal Budgets which establish beyond question that there was no arming in the serious sense till after the Jameson Raid.

The first of Dr. Doyle's four quotations is a rambling tirade against the Kruger party by a violently pro-British member of the Free State Raad, one P. Botha. There is no specific charge of sedition or conspiracy in it. The second is a passage from the reminiscences of Mr. T. Schreiner, recording a conversation held, "between seventeen and eighteen years ago," with Mr. Reitz who, when Mr. Schreiner told him he believed somebody wanted to overthrow the British power, is reported as replying, "Well, what if it is so?" and "But even so, what of that?" The third is a speech made by Mr. Kruger fifteen years ago, in which he

is reported as saying: "We are growing and are preparing the way to take our place among the great nations of the world. The dream of our life is a union of the States of South Africa, and this has to come from within, not from without." Quite like an Australian Premier foreseeing the formation of the Commonwealth!

Finally, in this unparalleled indictment, Dr. Doyle prints a letter which he picked up in a deserted Boer farmhouse, a note of which it is difficult to make sense, the only pertinent passage of which is the following, printed by our author in italics: "Dear Henry, the war are by us very much. How is it there by you. News is very scarce to write but much to speak by ourselves." The gravamen of this innocent, if illiterate, note—surely the frailest evidence on which a charge of wholesale conspiracy was ever based—is supposed to be that it was written "some fourteen weeks before the declaration of war, when the British were anxious for and confident in a peaceful solution"—that is, three weeks after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference! Dr. Doyle must know perfectly well that war was feared and discussed long before this date. I have before me, for instance, a series of resolutions protesting against an appeal to arms passed by the International Arbitration Association in the months of May, June, July, August, September, and October, 1899. But perhaps the London Arbitrationists were in the conspiracy also!

It is humiliating to have to argue seriously over puerilities of this kind. Self-convicted of a "mis-use of terms," Dr. Doyle is in fact guilty of a much more serious offence against truth and justice, a serious offence against political expediency even, not only in that such a charge lightly made to an International audience is more damaging to the prestige of the Empire than anything a "Pro-Boer" can say, but because it must have the most unfortunate effect amongst the maligned section of the South African peoples. If at some future time there is really an Africander conspiracy against Great Britain, it will be the fault of the violent action which is justified and the unscrupulous temper which is exemplified in books like this.

The Negotiations.

From either point of view, that of those who

say that President Kruger was the head of an Africander conspiracy, or those who say that Mr. Chamberlain, in succession to Mr. Rhodes, became the head of a British conspiracy, the long duel of 1896-9, which is dignified with the title of "the negotiations," can now only be of secondary interest. I cannot be content, with Dr. Doyle, to leave essential points—such as Mr. Chamberlain's insistence on the "suzerainty," which Dr. Doyle affects to regard as a matter of no moment, though it was the first and last point on which the British Government took its stand, the point which Sir Alfred Milner once described as a question of etymology, but on which Mr. Chamberlain, nevertheless, based his final refusal to negotiate further—without any attempt at explanation; but I shall not drag the reader over ground that has been covered a hundred times. The Blue-books are available at the public libraries; the important parts of the despatches have been printed in a small pamphlet (6d., Wm. Reeves, 83, Charing Cross Road); and they are summarised in Mr. Methuen's and other booklets. I shall only recall the most important points, considering them in the light of the facts already established. There is really no reason why simple minds should be fogged by the details of a long official correspondence. We have seen—

(1) That the Transvaal was an independent State, with one, and only one, qualification of its independence—the duty of submitting foreign treaties for the recognition or veto of the British Crown. No such treaty question arose. In all other matters the Transvaal was as independent of Great Britain as France or Germany. The Boer Government was willing to receive friendly recommendations on internal affairs so long as its independence was not questioned or compromised, and it adopted many such recommendations down to the offer of a five years' franchise, the extremest demand that had been made of it. Anything beyond this, anything in the nature of a threat, was a distinct breach of the London Convention of 1894, which secured to the Transvaal absolute internal independence, and as much a *casus belli* as such a threat would be if we addressed it to France or Germany. The Suzerainty Clause was deliberately struck out by Lord Derby in 1884 with his own

hand, as the facsimile reproduced in the Blue book [C. 9507] shows. As lately as October 17th, 1899, Lord Salisbury remarked that Mr. Kruger secured the omission by "considerable territorial and other sacrifices." The "complete independence and autonomy of the South African Republic, subject only to the restriction contained in the Convention of 1884"—to use the Lord Chief Justice's phrase at the Jameson Trial—has been repeatedly recognised by British Ministers, both Conservative and Liberal (see Methuen, p. 39, for quotations). Sir Edward Clarke, Ex-Solicitor-General, an impeccable Tory lawyer, on the eve of war, described the revival of the claim of suzerainty as "made in defiance of fact and a breach of national faith."

(2) That there was a Boer Reform Party; that reforms were being brought about more rapidly than they have been in this country; that in regard to the raiders and revolutionists President Kruger behaved with marked magnanimity; and that, although after the Raid the Transvaal Government began arming, evidently in self-defence, it made repeated and substantial concessions on the franchise and other questions. If the grievances were of so tolerable a character at the time of the Raid that the Uitlanders—whom Dr. Doyle treats as being about as numerous as the whole scattered Boer population—refused to revolt in order to remedy them, it is evident that they must have been very unsubstantial after repeated concessions, amounting in the final instance, as Mr. Chamberlain admitted (House of Commons, October 19th and 25th, 1899), to "nine-tenths" of what he required, the remaining "tenth" being only a question of "form."

(3) That, instead of the Rhodesian plot of 1895 being regarded as a blunder and a crime which ought to be lived down by an extreme self-control on the part of the British authorities, the plotters were lionised, and their aims were more and more openly adopted by the dominant English party. The *Times* and other leading journals supported plotters and partizans impartially; the fuel of the movement was provided by the Rhodesian press, which became, as Mr. Methuen, hitherto a steady supporter of the Government, like Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Maclean, and others,

said, "a manufactory of outrages." Mr. Chamberlain denied complicity in Jameson's silly expedition, but the constant communication with Mr. Rhodes, and the general identity of their policy and temper, were beyond denial. Instead of being stringently limited to the friendly representations that international law would permit, the "negotiations" were conducted on the British side in an increasingly provocative and minatory spirit which left the Transvaal Government no alternatives but complete surrender or war.

The Refusal of Arbitration.

Before recalling some of these threats, I have once more to correct Dr. Doyle in his statement of an essential point of fact. One of the most sinister coincidences in this deplorable story is England's refusal to apply to the dispute in South Africa the method of settlement of which she was standing before the Great Powers as the great champion—the method of Arbitration. When the British Government accepted the Tsar's invitation to the Hague Conference in 1898, Lord Salisbury felt that arbitration—not disarmament—was the most promising line of advance toward international peace; and, in a letter of instructions to Sir Julian Pauncefote, he said:—

"With regard to the question of making the employment of arbitration and mediation more general and effective for the settlement of international disputes, it is unnecessary for me to say that it is a matter to which Her Majesty's Government attach the highest importance, and which they are desirous of furthering by every means in their power."

I do not doubt that Lord Salisbury sincerely meant this: he may, in fact, be regarded as the chief author of the Arbitral Tribunal afterwards established at the Hague. (But Lord Salisbury was the weaker of two chiefs in the Ministry, and the other and stronger man was determined that there should be no arbitration over the Transvaal difficulties. Hence the extraordinary anomaly that that which Mr. Chamberlain persistently refused to President Kruger was being proclaimed almost simultaneously by the British and other envoys at the Hague to be the universal interest and duty of civilised States.) Mr. Chamberlain's paramountcy in the Cabinet was first shown by the exclusion of the Boer States, on British representations, from participation in the Hague Conference, an act for

which no juridical excuse can be pleaded. Even if general "suzerainty" existed—which it did not—there would be no excuse. Bulgaria is unquestionably under the suzerainty of Turkey, yet Bulgaria was represented, neither Turkey, nor Russia, nor Austria, nor Greece protesting.

However, the Republics made no public grievance of this exclusion, though they had every right to do so. The arbitration they were anxious to secure was of a humbler, more limited kind.

A Grave Misrepresentation.

One might have expected scrupulous accuracy of Dr. Doyle on a point like this. What we get is a misrepresentation of the utmost gravity. He says, speaking of the Bloemfontein Conference:

"Kruger offered a seven-years' franchise . . . and added a proposal that all differences should be subject to arbitration by foreign Powers" (p. 44).

The President proposed nothing of the kind. The official report of the Conference is perfectly clear.

"His Excellency [Sir A. Milner] had acknowledged that his Honour's request for arbitration by other than foreign Powers on all points of future difference under the Convention was reasonable."

As to franchise and other existing points, Sir Alfred Milner absolutely refused to agree to arbitration; and in closing the Conference he absolutely refused to say anything to bind the British Government as to future differences:

"The President must understand that I cannot pledge Her Majesty's Government in any way on this subject . . . I again insisted that I would not bargain for the franchise, either with arbitration or with anything else . . . At the very close of the Conference he told me that he hoped to hear from Her Majesty's Government about arbitration. I replied: 'I have nothing to propose to Her Majesty's Government on the subject'" (C. 9415).

In a despatch at the end of July, Mr. Chamberlain recognised "with satisfaction" that "at Bloemfontein President Kruger withdrew the proposal for the intervention of a foreign Power."

Later on (p. 50) Dr. Doyle accurately describes President Kruger as asking the British Government to agree to "arbitration by a British and South African tribunal." The British Agent thus reported the offer on August 15th, at the same time that he was reporting the offer of a five years' franchise:

"As regards arbitration they are willing that we should have any of our own judges or lawyers, English or Colonial, to represent us, and that the President or Umpire would be equally English, Colonial, or Boer" [C. 9521, p. 44]. Could anything be more reasonable and conciliatory?

This time it is the reply that Dr. Doyle mis-reports:

"To this Great Britain answered that she would agree to such arbitration."

No such reply was ever given. Quite the contrary. Mr. Chamberlain seems, indeed, to have been a little less implacable and aggressive than Sir Alfred Milner, who throughout the negotiations took an openly dictatorial line. In the despatch of July 27th he promised that when existing questions were done with the British Government "would be willing to consider how far and by what methods such questions of interpretation as have been alluded to could be decided by some judicial authority." But Sir Alfred Milner was allowed to refuse the Boer proposal in the most precise and uncompromising terms. Arbitration on existing questions was rejected; other unspecified "matters of difference" were declared to be "not proper for reference to arbitration"; arbitration on future questions was at no time accepted; and the only ground for Dr. Doyle's mis-statement of the despatch of August 30th is that it contained, in addition to these restrictions and refusals, a promise that at some future time "a discussion of the form and scope of a tribunal" of arbitration might be entered upon [C. 9530, p. 26].

Dr. Doyle, and others like him, want to have it both ways—to contend at one moment that the British Government was willing to arbitrate, and at another that it was impossible to submit the questions at issue to arbitration. The question of suzerainty, he says on page 22, "is a subject for the academic discussion of international jurists." From the point of view of his brief, that was a slip. At page 65 the regular Jingo line is taken on (1) Suzerainty; and Lord Milner's decision that "it is, of course, absurd" to propose arbitration on (2) The alleged grievances, (3) "Broad questions of policy," (4) "Questions of national honour," is quoted with approval. As there is no conceivable point of difference which could not be

got into this quadruple category of excluded subjects, we are justified in saying that the British Government refused arbitration all round.

The Campaign of Threats.

On September 8th Mr. Chamberlain once more declared that suzerainty was a *conditio sine quâ non*, demanded "an immediate and definite reply" whether the Boer Government would make the reforms unconditionally, and in case of a "negative or inconclusive" reply "*Her Majesty's Government must reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation de novo, and to formulate their own proposals for a settlement.*" On September 12th the British Agent at Pretoria informed State Secretary Reitz that the British Government were "*unable to consider any proposal which is made conditional*" on the abandonment of the suzerainty claim. On the 25th he further wrote that it was "*useless to further pursue a discussion on the lines hitherto followed, and Her Majesty's Government are now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement.*" So far from there being any waiting on the British side, as Dr. Doyle alleges (p. 49), the Boers waited for just a month for the ultimatum thus twice threatened, and then they delivered their own.

In the speech, a week after the outbreak of hostilities, in which he extorted from Mr. Chamberlain the remarkable confession that the British Government had accepted "nine-tenths of the whole" of the Boer proposals at the time when it refused to negotiate further, Sir Edward Clarke thus referred to this latest achievement of "the new diplomacy":

"It is dreadful to think of a country of this kind entering upon a war, a crime against civilisation, when this sort of thing has been going on. . . . If I had read these Blue Books not knowing the persons who were concerned in the matter, I confess that I should have been forced to the conclusion that the correspondence was conducted not with a view of peace. . . . If the Government were going in the direction of war, these Blue Books were the very things to excite sympathy and support for them in this country, and to excite a feeling in the Transvaal which was as hostile to the preservation of peace as was the excitement of a violent war feeling here."

A few further samples of the policy of aggravation which has been maintained by the Colonial

Secretary and the present High Commissioner since the appointment of the latter in 1897, and more especially since his visit to this country in 1898, may be added to those already given. As to the power behind these two lands—the South African League, the Uitlanders' Council, and the Rhodesian press in the one case; in the other all the Jingo organisations of England, big and little, high and low, and the new force of Harmsworthian journalism—I must leave all this to the imagination and memory of the reader. He will remember that weird incarnation of militant Imperialism “the Mafficker”; and he cannot have forgotten all the proved lies with which the press has regaled us for the last three years.

Milner Demands Intervention.

When, in January, 1896, Mr. Chamberlain wished to send an army to South Africa, it was Sir Hercules Robinson who dissuaded him. The new High Commissioner was made of different stuff, and as soon as the Raid trials and inquiries were closed, Mr. Chamberlain was free to take up the broken thread of his old designs. It is true that in the interval he had recognised, like Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, and other of his colleagues, the absolute right of the Boers to settle their domestic affairs without interference—“the whole question from the beginning was about the internal affairs of another country,” as Dr. Doyle says—and that he had denounced, in words which no “pro-Boer” could make more emphatic, the bare idea of using force against them in regard thereto. But Mr. Chamberlain has never found any difficulty in repudiating his own words and his own actions. Sir Alfred Milner kept the furnace of his prejudice well stoked. It did not take him long to create civil strife between the Dutch and the English in Cape Colony; the myth of an “Africander conspiracy” was for this “prancing pro-Consul” a basis not only for the subsequent plea that war with the Transvaal was “inevitable,” but also for the subsequent suspension of civil and political rights in Cape Colony.

By May, 1899, everything was, or seemed to be, ready for an active policy. On the 5th of that month Milner wrote to Chamberlain his sensational cablegram retailing at length the woes of the

"helots," as he called them, of Johannesburg. "The case for intervention," he said, "was overwhelming," and he demanded "a striking proof" of British paramountcy. Speaking two days later in Cape Town, he said the British people "had set out to make an end of the business once and for all, to make South Africa one country under one flag, and with one system of law and government." Mr. Chamberlain, affecting moderation, even while he was adding the claim of paramountcy—a word with no meaning in law, and of no other meaning except as a political and military threat—to that of "suzerainty," proposed a conference, no doubt expecting that the Englishman would come best out of the argument. The Bloemfontein meeting lasted five days only, and even during that time Lord Milner professed to regard the prospect of an agreement as "remote."

Military Preparations: The First Ultimatum.

While the Raad was passing a Reform Bill the progressive and promising character of which Mr. Chamberlain repeatedly recognised, Lord Wolseley was laying before the British Government a plan of campaign by which not only the Transvaal, but also the Orange Free State (whose "laws were as liberal as our own," says Dr. Doyle), could be conquered by the following November (Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords, March 15th, 1901. *Hansard*, IV. series, vol. 91); and the Intelligence Department had issued its "Notes" for such a campaign. It is with these facts before him—though he does not think them worth mentioning—that Dr. Doyle pretends to regard the subsequent action of the Boers as a surprise to a wholly innocent and pacific British Ministry!

Perhaps Mr. Chamberlain—who is an "efficient" politician, at least in the narrow sense—mistrusted the War Office. At any rate, he did his best to gain time while reinforcements were being hurried out from India and home, while the reserves were being called out, while troops were being hurried up in Cape Colony and Natal, and Mafeking and other towns were being prepared for sieges which they bore so gallantly. But by the beginning of August Frankenstein's monster had begun to get the upper hand. On the 12th of that month the

Times—always up-to-date, if not a little too previous, when the Rhodesian conspirator is on the war-path—declared that “the last lingering hesitation” to a resort to armed force had been removed. On the 15th the British Agent at Pretoria delivered the virtual ultimatum which I have already mentioned: “*Her Majesty’s Government would be bound to assert their demands, and if necessary to press them by force. I said that the only chance for the South African Republic Government was an immediate surrender to the Bloemfontein minimum.*” “If Mr. Chamberlain was really playing a game of bluff,” says Dr. Doyle, “it must be confessed that he was bluffing from a very weak hand.” More wisdom after the event! When will our Jingoese recognise that the braggart’s hand is always weak when the strongest sentiments of manhood are aroused against him? At the time the hand was supposed to be invincibly strong. Said the *Times* on August 16th:

“The regular troops at present in South Africa, together with the irregular levies at the disposal of the military authorities, would be fully equal to cope with any force the Boers could put into the field.”

The “unpreparedness” was a measure not of our innocence, but of our cock-sureness. It was only the villainous “pro-Boers,” rich with Kruger’s gold, and the imbecile “Peace-at-any-price” men who dared then to tell the truth which Dr. Doyle now tries to misuse.

Vituperation and Dupliolity.

On August 26th followed Mr. Chamberlain’s speech at Highbury, aiming phrases of vulgar vituperation against the aged President, his enemy, which Dr. Doyle is not ashamed to speak of as “plainness of speech unusual as it is welcome in diplomacy.” Unusual, truly, to denounce the head of an independent State as “a squeezed sponge,” and as costly as it was unusual. “The sands are running down in the glass,” quoth our Birmingham hero. “The knot must be loosened, or else we shall have to find other ways of untying it.” Two years and a-half have passed and that knot is still untied. The effect of these words upon a people who prized their independence as their lives may be imagined. It was in vain that President Steyn used his influence for peace, that the Cape Ministry

made strong representations in the same direction, and that at home we Arbitrationists got up a protest against the policy of war which received 54,000 signatures in a fortnight. The war press was now fully awake; to speak for peace was already becoming dangerous. Parliament was not sitting; Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner had the game in their own hands.

The part of the Orange Free State demands a further word. President Steyn's despatches, which Lord Milner expurgated for Mr. Chamberlain's benefit, and which he scoffs at as "ungracious," are a fine piece of pacific statesmanship to which history will do justice. Lord Milner's attitude was one of duplicity which could only be justified on Machiavelian grounds. That the Orange Free State would cast in its lot with the Transvaal had not been anticipated. It was necessary, if possible, to stave off a course which Dr. Doyle—always blind to the real qualities of this race, and forgetting for a moment the Jingo maxim that an honourable war is better than a dishonourable peace—decries as "singularly rash and unprofitable," even "suicidal." So we find Lord Milner whipping Mr. Chamberlain up with one hand, while he is administering the oiled feather to Mr. Steyn with the other:—

TO CHAMBERLAIN.

"The purport of all representations made to me is to *urge prompt and decided action*. . . . *British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures*, and is ready to suffer much in order to see the vindication of British authority. It is a prolongation of the negotiations, endless and indecisive, that is dreaded. I fear seriously that there will be a *strong reaction* against the policy of Her Majesty's Government *if matters drag*." (Aug. 31st).

TO STEYN.

"H.M. Government are *still hopeful of a friendly settlement*." (September 19th).

"I adhere to the hope expressed." (September 25th).

"I can only repeat the assurances given" (October 2nd).

"I cannot believe that the S.A. Republic will make such aggressive action, or that your Honour would countenance such a course. . . . Till the threatened act

The answer to this appeal was the decision of the Cabinet on September 8th to send reinforcements from India and England; the refusal of the British Government to revert to its own proposal of a Joint Committee of Inquiry, and the final breaking off of negotiations by Lord Milner on Mr. Chamberlain's instructions on September 22nd; and the calling out of the Reserves and mobilisation of an Army Corps on October 7th.

of aggression is committed, *I shall not despair of peace*" (October 4th).

"My object . . . has been to leave nothing undone which could prevent action on the part of the S.A. Republic calculated to make a pacific solution finally impossible" (October 7th).

Final Threats and the Boer Retort.

Still the Boers did not move. The first commandeering in the Transvaal did not take place till September 28th—six weeks after the first formal threat of force by the British agent, a month after Mr. Chamberlain's second formal threat (August 26th), three weeks after the ordering out of reinforcements, one week after the final suspension of negotiations, and a few days after a forward move of troops had been made both in Natal and Cape Colony. The war which Lord Machiavelli in Cape Town at once urged on and protested against now looked inevitable. In England the drum beat ceaselessly. On September 14th the *Times* said that Mr. Chamberlain's despatch of the 8th "is not necessarily an ultimatum, but *it is clearly the prelude to an ultimatum* should the reply prove to be unfavourable." The *Daily Mail* more cynically remarked: "*When our preparations are complete and our forces are on the field the ultimatum will follow.*" On September 20th Mr. Hayes Fisher, Junior Lord of the Treasury, thus openly explained the Ministerial plan:—

"*The Government must now send a sufficient force to the Cape to insure that when the final ultimatum was presented the Boers should not be able to mistake the fact of our having enough troops there to secure the ends we were determined*

to achieve. Then, perhaps, they would listen to the voice of reason, and not enter upon an unequal contest and invite us to inflict upon them a crushing defeat and take from them the country they so much cherished."

The wheel had turned full circle since the day in May, 1896, when Mr. Chamberlain denounced the idea of sending an ultimatum and declared that "to go to war with President Kruger to force upon him reforms in the internal affairs of his State" would be "a course of action as immoral as unwise." The ultimatum—or shall we say the penultimatum—had been delivered; the war, which was to be "one of the most serious that could possibly be waged," "a long war, a bitter war, a costly war," was being entered upon lightly and with absolute confidence of a speedy and profitable result.

Here is the whole simple truth which Dr. Doyle tries to bury under the pretence that a pacific British Government was being "jumped" by an open conspiracy—his own idea, if not his own words—of Afrianders "armed to the teeth." It is a very thin and inconsistent pretence. On the one hand Dr. Doyle admits that, after the Boer answer to the British note of September 8th, "in Africa all hope or fear of peace had ended"; and that the note of September 22nd, though "not an ultimatum, foreshadowed an ultimatum in the future." On the other, he describes the demands for the stoppage of over-sea reinforcements which the Boers sent in, after repeatedly asking for the promised new British proposals, seventeen days later (October 9th), as "unexpected and audacious." How long could he or anyone else suppose the Boers would lie quietly waiting for the conquering force which, as British Ministers, administrators, and journalists almost unanimously believed, would snuff their Republics out in a month? It is true that the Boer counter-ultimatum "was received throughout the Empire with a mixture of derision and anger." The Empire has learned much since then, at a terrible price; and I take leave to doubt whether in its heart it will thank the author of "Sherlock Holmes" for this effort to represent it as still wallowing in the mire of its early infatuation.

V.—THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

I do not propose to follow Dr. Doyle in devoting more space to the subject of the conduct of the war than to that of its cause or causes. The war itself is the great, the monstrous evil, besides which any details of its conduct sink into comparative insignificance. Men who declare in one breath that the war was inevitable, and that it is slanderous to talk about "methods of barbarism," are merely exhibiting their ignorance of history and their incapacity to look contemporary facts in the face. True, it takes a great deal to convert any Englishman to that deep and permanent anti-force bias which is the chief prescription of the Peace Party. Force lies in the very blood of the peoples we miscall Anglo-Saxon; and it is so long since we have ourselves been involved in a great war that the terrors of the battle-field were like an almost forgotten myth. Anyone who on the eve of the war had foretold the things that have actually been done in the name of England would have been dismissed as a raving maniac. Even among the ranks of definitely humane people—the people who keep our great charities and philanthropies going—there was no sort of apprehension of the bloodshed and devastation and the bitter civil strife that were impending. Some of the most able and active opponents of the war policy were far from being convinced Peace men at the outset; they have learned for the first time in the saturnalia of the last two and a-half years that while war is never quite inevitable—men being at worst a little above the beasts—in warfare, once undertaken, "methods of barbarism" are inevitable; that, in fact, warfare is necessarily one huge method of barbarism.

Farm Burning a Shocking Failure.

There are, however, two or three broad questions of military and political policy which deserve to be separated from the mass of charges of inhumanity levelled by each side against the other; and Dr. Conan Doyle does well to devote a chapter to the question of farm burning and a chapter to the concentration camps. On the former subject he makes

considerable concessions. Farm burning, he admits (page 84), "came to assume proportions which shocked public opinion. It must be admitted that the results have not justified it, and that, putting all moral questions apart, a burned-out family is the last which is likely to settle down . . . as contented British citizens." These opening sentences of the chapter really make the following pages of excuse quite valueless. The plea is the long-exploded plea of "guerilla tactics": "the army which is stung by guerillas strikes round it furiously and occasionally indiscriminately." It "becomes embittered, and a General feels called upon to take harsher measures." Lord Monkswell has well said (in a letter to the *Times*) of this plea—this "debatable, and even objectionable, matter," as he calls it—that it might be used to justify the poisoning of wells or other ancient expedients. What does Dr. Doyle mean by "guerillas"? The punishment of snipers by burning the farm in which they are caught is one thing; the desolation of a district "*at or near which*" (to quote the words of Lord Roberts's proclamation) railways have been damaged or telegraph lines cut is quite another. "Nothing can be more imperative in war than the preservation of the communications of the army," says Dr. Doyle; "and it is impossible without such disciplinary measures to preserve a line of 1,000 miles running all the way through a hostile or semi-hostile country." <Then it is not a question of snipers or other "guerillas" at all, but of the normal and legitimate procedure of warfare! Dr. Doyle coolly remarks that something may be said for the Rules of Warfare agreed upon at the Hague, and something for the plea of military necessity, but he gives his casting vote to the latter. This is all very well for an irresponsible scribbler, but what should we say if we as a nation were the victims of this kind of light-hearted breach of solemn conventions to which the invading Power had bound itself?> Dr. Doyle admits categorically the folly and injustice of the measures in question—"as a matter of fact, farm burning had no effect in checking the railway cutting, and had a considerable effect in embittering the population. . . The punishment fell with cruel injustice upon some individuals. Others may have been among the actual raiders." He is particularly clear in

condemning the destruction of the homes of surrendered burghers who afterwards went on commando for lack of protection by the British, and demands compensation in these cases.

"Guerillas"—For Election Purposes.

But amid all these confessions of military folly, cruel and wholesale injustice, and deliberate breaking of treaty promises, he continues to be obsessed by the idea that at a certain stage, apparently in the autumn of 1900, the war degenerated into something quite different from and deplorably lower than what it had been. Has he, I wonder, forgotten the real reason for the temporary vogue of that theory? The memories of some of us carry back easily to the election campaign of 1900, the need of the Chamberlain party to show that the still unended war was even then ended, and the support given to that pretence by Lord Roberts's notice to General Botha that "the farm nearest the scene of any attempt to injure the line or wreck a train is to be burnt, and that all the farms within a radius of ten miles are to be completely cleared of all their stock, supplies, &c."—why? Because, except Botha's army, "there is now no formed body of Boer troops in the Transvaal or Orange River Colony, and the war is degenerating into operations carried on by irregular and irresponsible guerillas." Those guerillas, those armies which did not exist, the armies of De Wet, Delarey, and others have held the field for eighteen months against 250,000 British troops. Equipped at first with artillery and transport, acting in concert, with telegraphs under their control, and mysterious sources of supply, occupying and re-occupying towns which we were forced to abandon, invading and re-invading our colonies, and marching hundreds of miles without serious interference, these non-existent armies are still able to capture British forces hundreds strong; and, demoralised guerillas though they be, they appear to know how to give a British General who falls into their hands a practical lesson at once in courtesy and in military skill. Lord Roberts was more careful of himself than Lord Methuen, and so he missed a lesson which might have borne good fruit both in Pall Mall and the House of Lords.

Breaches of the Hague Convention.

Let me recall once more the fact that Dr. Doyle is supposed to be vindicating the fair fame of England. Yet, in regard to the cause or causes of the war he declined even to attempt to make out a legal case for forcible interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal; and now, in regard to the conduct of the war, and this important question of devastation in particular, he admits that Lord Roberts acted in defiance of the Convention revising the Brussels Rules of Warfare which were signed by the British Envoy at the Hague Conference only a few months before the outbreak of the war. This is a rather more serious matter than Dr. Doyle appears to think, not only because, for most people, a promise deliberately made should be faithfully kept, but also because it is on this very ground that many of the most tried and convinced friends of England abroad have now joined the ranks of her censors. Of many deeds of violence on both sides in this awful contest, of the sacrifice of women and children, of the hospital scandals and contract scandals, it may be said that these things are really inseparable from warfare; who advocates war is implicitly advocating them; who excuses war must excuse them. Of the wholesale disfranchisement of Cape Colonists on pretence of punishing treason, it may at least be said that the Cape Dutch are strong enough to take care of themselves, and sooner or later they will do so. But when the British Commander-in-Chief deliberately breaks the rules of "civilised" warfare, we have another kind of offence against humanity—one that, even if less grave in itself, may have graver consequences. The breaches mentioned by Dr. Doyle are not the only ones. Section III. of the Convention deals with Military Authority over hostile territory, Article XLIV. declaring that "any compulsion of the population of occupied territory to take part in military operations against their own country is prohibited." Yet Lord Roberts was reported as having proclaimed that "prisoners are warned to acquaint Her Majesty's forces of the presence of the enemy upon their farms, otherwise they will be regarded as aiding and abetting the enemy." Whether giving military information is "taking part in military operations" we must leave to

lawyers to decide. But on other points the Convention is clearer. By Article XLV. "any pressure on the population of occupied territory to take oath to the hostile Power is prohibited." But the Commander-in-Chief was reported to have prescribed "the most rigorous measures against all persons who have broken the oath of neutrality, or who, being residents in districts under British occupation, have not taken the oath. All burghers in districts occupied by British forces, except those who have sworn the oath, will be regarded as prisoners of war and transported." This appears to be a plain infraction of the Convention, the provision of which is still further emphasised by Article L.: "No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise" [here we recall the threat that fines will now be "rigorously exacted"] "can be inflicted on the population on account of the acts of individuals, for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible." Article XLVI. is also worth quoting: "Family honours and rights, individual lives and property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated." There is abundant evidence that it was often confiscated—retail and wholesale.

Warfare by Proclamation.

The fact is that—as Dr. Doyle virtually admits—Lord Roberts was rapidly provoking the enemy into forms of retaliation which have been unheard of since his return from South Africa. Consider the series of proclamations which were designed to supply the place of military skill. In February, 1900, he solemnly promised that burghers who did not oppose the invading army, even though they had been under arms, should not be disturbed. In the following month this assurance was limited to "burghers who had not taken a prominent part in the policy of the war," and who were willing to take oath of allegiance or neutrality. At the end of May the pass system was extended to the Transvaal, but it was further announced that for damage to property "not only will the actual perpetrators, and all directly or indirectly implicated, be liable to the most severe punishment in person and property, but the property of all persons, whether

in authority or otherwise, who have permitted, or who have not done their best to prevent, such wanton damage, will be liable to be confiscated and destroyed." Here is the first clear severance of guilt and punishment. In June this was pushed a stage further, principal residents being made jointly and severally responsible for all damage to railways, etc., in their districts, and the director of military railways authorised to place residents in military trains so as to be exposed to the risk of death in case of attack—a cowardly and illegal expedient which Dr. Doyle actually defends. At the same time houses and farms near which damage was done were to be destroyed, and the residents dealt with under martial law. Men on commando were warned in July that if they did not surrender their property would be confiscated, and, as an enterprising officer at Krugersdorp added, in the name of the Queen, "their families turned out destitute and homeless." On August 11th the early promises to protect peaceable burghers were revoked, and the transportation policy began. All burghers not sworn would be transported, all buildings where the enemy's scouts were harboured would be destroyed, fines would be rigorously exacted, and persons not warning the British forces of the presence of the enemy would be regarded as aiding and abetting them. Thus burghers were forced to fight on one side or the other, or to be imprisoned or exiled. On September 13th Lord Roberts threatened new measures, which would be "ruinous to the country, entail endless suffering," and become daily more rigorous. Earlier in the month he had given the orders already referred to that all farmhouses near which damage was done to railways should be burned, and farms for ten miles round stripped of provisions, &c. Dr. Doyle says that only 630 buildings are known to have been destroyed, "more than half" on pleas that would be allowed by the laws of warfare. A gentleman who was out there as long as Dr. Doyle, and had as good opportunities of finding out, estimated in November, 1900, that about five thousand farms had been destroyed; and Dr. Doyle is certainly wrong in saying that farm-burning "ceased in 1900." The policy of devastation goes on to this day, though it has been limited in the main of late to crops and herds. As "a not

unknown officer in South Africa" wrote in the *Daily Mail* of November 22nd last:—

"Lord Roberts has sown the wind—the country is now reaping the whirlwind. To do evil that good may come has ever been held to be immoral, and sooner or later the reward of the wrong-doing must be reaped."

There has been no more "Mafficking" since then!

"The Duty of Opposing the Invaders."

The considerations which I have based upon the text of The Hague Convention have an older and nearer foundation. Up to the outbreak of the war, the attitude of Great Britain towards small States threatened with invasion by superior Powers was one of steady sympathy and assistance. This temper, which was illustrated in the execration poured upon the name of the Spanish General Weyler when he applied the policy of devastation and "concentration" to Cuba, was still more pointedly marked in the special instructions to our delegates upon the section of The Hague Conference that had the revision of the Brussels Rules in hand. (Two main motives appeared in the deliberations of that section. The first was the general desire to provide against practices that had arisen in and after the Franco-German War—practices which Dr. Doyle now attempts to use as precedents; the second was the anxiety of the small Powers, and England with and for them, to take care that the Rules were not moulded so as to limit the "right and duty of patriotic resistance" against invasion in countries where such resistance would fall not upon a large permanent army, but upon the body of the people. Switzerland was a case in point, and the case was precisely that of the Boer Republics.) So strong were the instructions of the British Delegates at The Hague, that at a meeting of Section II., Committee B, Sir John Ardagh actually proposed the following additional clause:

"Nothing in this chapter shall be considered as tending to lessen or suppress the rights which belong to the population of an invaded country to fulfil its duty of opposing the invaders by all lawful means with the most energetic patriotic resistance."

Owing to German opposition, the clause was not adopted, but it represented British policy, it was

to some extent expressed in the President's declaration explanatory of the Convention, and it points to the chief provisions wherein the Convention is an advance upon the Declaration of 1874, which indeed remained unadopted largely because of the feeling of many States that patriotic sentiment and the right of using every means of defence against an invader were not sufficiently respected.

The Concentration Camps.

I will not enter into the details of Dr. Doyle's apology for the Concentration Camps. Toward Miss Hobhouse he is as mean as Mr. Brodrick, though not quite as rude and violent as the *Daily Mail*. "Her political prejudices were known to be against the Government!" A relation, the M.P., "admitted" that she was mistaken! Her conclusions were bound to be untrustworthy because "she could speak no Dutch, had no experience of Boer character, and knew nothing of the normal conditions of South African life." If these were disqualifications, Dr. Doyle himself would have no right to offer any opinion. But are definite facts about diet, water-supply, sanitation, over-crowding, and death rates really beyond one who does not know the Dutch language and the Boer character? What do Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Chamberlain know on those points? The death-rates (which Dr. Doyle suppresses) tell their own tale—one need set nothing else against his six pages of whitewashing evidence. They rose steadily from 170 in June to 338 in October last per thousand per annum—those of children only from 159 to 572 per thousand. Then Mr. Chamberlain took the matter out of the hands of the War Office with his categorical imperative: "No expense must be allowed to stand in the way." By January last the general rate had fallen to 189, and the children's rate to 247. To Miss Hobhouse belongs the credit for the improvement and the honour of a brave attempt, carried through in spite of slander and attempts at personal violence, to awaken the conscience of the country.

Dr. Doyle does help us, however, to two fragments of the truth. In the first place he reminds us of the barbarous decree by which it was sought by the semi-starvation of Boer women and children

to force their husbands and fathers to surrender. Mr. Brodrick made the shameful confession on February 26th last year and he was loudly cheered from the Ministerial benches. He said: "A distinction in regard to rations has been drawn between those who have surrendered with their husbands and fathers and those who come in to be fed"—that is, those who are swept into corrals in course of the denudation of the country—"while their relatives are still in the field." As Dr. Doyle half excuses the distinction, I prefer simply to quote one of the military critics on this unprecedented avowal: "I can conceive no more humiliating confession being wrung from a British Minister, nor can I conceive of a greater degradation of political conscience than that indicated by the fact that so humiliating a confession was greeted with the cheers and approval of his political supporters." In the second place, Dr. Doyle rightly traces responsibility for the camps back to the policy of devastation and vengeance:

We cannot deny that the cause of the outbreak of measles was the collection of the women and children by us into the camps. But why were they collected into camps? Because they could not be left on the veldt. And why could they not be left on the veldt? Because we had destroyed the means of subsistence. And why had we destroyed the means of subsistence? To limit the operations of the mobile bands of guerillas (page 98).

"The Peace of the Wilderness and the Grave."

We need rely on no mere politician or publicist on this question; we may even take the soldier on his own ground, and recall the opinion of Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain on "the horrors that had already devastated and are still devastating the two Boer States. *Never before has anything approaching to such wholesale and reckless destruction or abduction of families been enacted by a British Army.*" (Letters to *Manchester Guardian*, August 5th and 26th, 1901.) This, of course, does not mean that there was no precedent. Here is a passage from President McKinley's Message to Congress in April, 1898, stating the grounds of American intervention in Cuba, which suggests almost a literal parallel:—

"The efforts of Spain to suppress the insurrection have been increased by the addition to the horrors of the strife of a new and inhuman phase, happily unprecedented in the modern

history of a civilised people. The peasantry, including all dwelling in the open agricultural interior, were driven into the garrison towns or isolated places held by the troops. The raising and movement of provisions were interdicted, fields were laid waste, dwellings unroofed and fired, and mills destroyed. . . . The agricultural population . . . was herded within the towns and their immediate vicinage, deprived of means of support, rendered destitute of shelter, left poorly clad, and exposed to most insanitary conditions. . . . From month to month the death-rate increased to an alarming ratio. . . . *The reconcentration, adopted avowedly as a war measure to cut off the resources of the insurgents, worked its predestined result. It was extermination. The only peace it could beget was that of the wilderness and the grave.* . . . A long trial has proved that the object for which Spain has waged the war cannot be attained. The fire of insurrection may flame or may smoulder with varying seasons, but it has been and it is plain that it cannot be extinguished by the present methods. . . . In the name of humanity, in the name of civilisation . . . the war in Cuba must stop."

It was evident at the beginning of his book that if Dr. Doyle got rope enough, so to speak, he would surely hang himself. I have said that the war itself is the supreme evil, and for that Mr. Chamberlain and his backers are responsible. Within the war the centre of gravity is the policy of devastation, and its corollary, the death camps; and for that the men who, whether from shortness of temper or election motives, or both, decided upon "harsher measures" in the autumn of 1900. Dr. Doyle's journalistic needs were a sort of miniature of Lord Roberts's military and Mr. Chamberlain's political objects. In the autumn of 1900 Dr. Doyle, for the purposes of his "history" of the still unended war, had to decide for himself and others that the war was really ended, all that remained being "guerilla" forays. Lord Roberts could not come home to receive his earldom with a less comprehensive report; Ministers could not go to the country, which had been led to believe that all would be over in a month, and honestly confess that after a year they were "no forrarder." I have not read "The Hound of the Baskervilles," but I should expect to find it a cleverer essay in the art of reviving dead tales than this pitiful pamphlet.

Charges Against Soldiers: Expansive Bullets.

With an exception presently to be mentioned, we have now dealt with the broad questions of policy which constitute the important aspects of

the conduct of the war. Dr. Doyle seeks to compensate for his altogether unsatisfactory treatment of these questions, on which some accuracy of judgment is possible, by giving many pages to the charges of individual misconduct which have been levelled by each side against the other in this as in all previous wars. Concerned as I am, not only for accuracy in detail, but for true proportion in the whole subject, I altogether refuse to follow this misleading procedure. Dr. Doyle does not even begin to be judicial. It may be, as he asseverates, that the British soldier has always behaved like a gentleman, while the Boer has generally behaved—well, like a guerilla. Eminent Imperialists like Mr. Kipling had hardly led us to expect such “plaster saint”-liness, and the evidence, if such it can be called, offered in these pages would not be worth much in a law court, where, indeed, Dr. Doyle would have been required to specify at the outset the “politicians at home” whom he charges with having “most foully attacked” the soldiers’ characters. I do not know any public man, politician or humanitarian, who has not rested his case against the conduct of the war on facts which Dr. Doyle admits and acts which he excuses. A vague charge of cruel conduct in the heat of battle against individual fighters is a thing about which, as Dr. Doyle admits, assertions “should be accepted with considerable caution.” Unfortunately, when dealing with the enemy he forgets his precept. The open advocacy of a definite policy such as that of placing prisoners as hostages on railway trains threatened with admittedly legitimate attack, to which Dr. Doyle commits himself (page 131, etc.), is in a very much more serious category, as he would see quickly enough if it were a question, for instance, of Boers tying up British prisoners inside a farm threatened with destruction.

There is one charge of this more general description—not against the soldiery, but against the Government—which Dr. Doyle not only fails to rebut, but as to which he is grossly inaccurate in his statement of facts. There is not the slightest doubt, all his ingenuous statements to the contrary, that millions—not “some hundreds of thousands”—of expansive bullets have been sent out for use by British troops in South Africa. In

the House of Commons, on July 11th, 1899, Mr. Wyndham definitely spoke of the expansive Mark IV ammunition as having been "the service bullet for the British Army"—not "for target practice only," or for sporting purposes—for eighteen months previously, and they were then still being manufactured. Undoubtedly it was captured ammunition of this type that the Boers were occasionally found using against us in the early stages of the war. Challenged by Mr. Alfred Marks, in the *Daily News* (*q.v.*, February 1st, 1902), Dr. Doyle has admitted that he had no right to say the Boers used "explosive" bullets (Lord Roberts, who made the same charge, has not yet withdrawn it). As I read this book and think of the corrections it would require in all 300,000 copies of the English edition and its sixteen foreign versions to bring it anywhere near to accuracy, I am reminded of Will Carleton's lines :—

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds.
You can't do that when you are flying words."

Here is another specimen from the same page "The expansive bullet is not, as a matter of fact, contrary to the Conventions of the Hague. It was expressly held from being so by the representatives of the United States and of Great Britain." I begin to be ultra-suspicious whenever Dr. Doyle says "as a matter of fact." There is only one "matter of fact" about it, which is, that expansive bullets were absolutely condemned by the Hague Conference (July 21st, 1899—ratified in the third "Declaration" of the Congress), in spite of the dissent of the British and American delegates.

Charges Against the Boers.

The chapter entitled "The Other Side of the Question" depends upon the baseless plea already examined, that after a year of warfare the Boers degenerated into mere banditti. Dr. Doyle opens with a confession :

"Writing in November, 1900, after hearing an expression of opinion from many officers from various parts of the seat of war, I stated in 'The Great Boer War': 'The Boers have been the victims of a great deal of cheap slander in the press. The men who have seen most of the Boers in the field are the most generous in estimating their character.'"

"These words," he adds, "could not possibly be written to-day." As a matter of fact, words very

similar could be quoted from many British witnesses to-day, and for a year past there has been a remarkable decline in the tales of Boer outrages previously current. The only new allegation which Dr. Doyle can discover is what he calls "systematic murdering of the Kaffirs by the Boers." Anticipating an obvious question, he adds, "Beyond allowing natives to defend their own lives and property when attacked, as in the case of the Baralonga at Mafeking and the Kaffirs in the Transkei, we have only employed Kaffirs"—armed he means—"in the pages of the continental cartoons." This is an evidently inaccurate statement: indeed, two pages later, Dr. Doyle admits that armed Kaffirs have latterly been employed to "watch the railway line." We know, from recent reports, that they have been used in the blockhouses. No one knows in fact, except those whose business it is not to speak, how far they have been employed; and it is therefore impossible to say how far the Boers can rightly plead the sanction of military custom. The one point of which we have certain knowledge is that we have used Kaffirs universally as spies—"scouts," and "intelligence natives" Dr. Doyle prefers to call them; and as Dr. Doyle himself defends the shooting of spies when we catch them, he is not very logical in quoting these cases against the Boers. Historic circumstances made it certain from the first that the latter would sternly punish armed blacks, where they would treat white captives humanely. The chief responsibility for any outrages of this kind lies upon us. Our own record is by no means clean. Dr. Doyle must have heard of the case of Cape Policeman Smith, who, on the orders of a Captain Cox, "drilled a hole," as the latter put it, in a native who delayed in giving up a bridle for which he was asked. Smith was charged with murder at Cape Town (October 30th, 1900), and acquitted amid the applause of the Court. Captain Cox, who was excused on the ground that he was hurried and annoyed, was not even put on trial.

The general answer to Dr. Doyle is suggested by his own observation that the safety of 42,000 male Boer prisoners proves the humanity of the British Army. Thousands of British soldiers, including scores of officers, have been captives in the hands of the Boers, and have on the whole been treated with conspicuous chivalry. Moreover

Dr. Doyle, as I have said before, can't have it both ways: he can't advocate the exclusion of the enemy from the rights of "civilised" warfare on the grounds that they are banditti, and then demand of them the high standard of virtue which he attributes to Tommy Atkins.

Martial Lawlessness in Cape Colony.

There is a wholly inadequate section on "Executions," which is only interesting because, among thirty-four stated cases, two were for train-wrecking, two others for train-wrecking *plus* murdering a native, two (Boers) for breach of the oath of neutrality, one for spying, one for "persuading surrendered burghers to break oath," and one for desertion *plus* horse-stealing. Nearly all the other cases are executions of rebels simply for "fighting." Few of these penalties could be defended on grounds of law, and hardly any on grounds of policy. Natal is ignored; and reprisals in the shape of heavy fines are not mentioned. Yet, a telegram from Durban, on March 14th last, reported that the Natal Treason Court had dealt with over 500 cases, "the total number of Natal rebels being estimated at 800"—not much ground left for amnesty here!—fines to the extent of over £32,000 being imposed, and terms of imprisonment from ten years downward.

Dr. Doyle says nothing of the administration of martial law—one more major omission. Let me briefly quote some authoritative opinions on the subject. The Constitution of Cape Colony had been tacitly suspended for some months when, on October 9th, 1901, a further downward step was taken—the virtual abrogation of the common law by the extension, on October 9th, of martial law to Cape Town and other places where it had not hitherto been imposed. This action of the soldiery in South Africa was as clearly illegal as it was impolitic. Mr. Frederic Harrison, himself a constitutional lawyer, speaking at Newton Hall, on October 13th, laid down these three propositions, which, he said, were sustained by the highest of English judges, from Coke to Cockburn:

1. "That if any British subject was put to death—not in war, not as a spy, and not in the course of actual military operations, but put to death after a mock trial for treason or for some such civil offence—every man who ordered, aided, or

abetted in his death was liable to be tried by a jury on a charge of murder."

2. "That unless any man charged with such death could satisfy a jury of his countrymen that the act was a *bonâ fide* military necessity for the carrying out of some direct military operation, and was not a mere act of revenge, of terrorism, or of usurpation of civil law, the accused, whether soldier or civilian, general or governor, was undoubtedly guilty of murder."

3. "That if any mock court-martial arrogated to itself the prerogative of civil government, and pretended to pass sentences of penal servitude, such proceedings were not only null and void, but were in themselves crimes, and every man—soldier or civilian, officer of justice or of police—who attempted to give effect to such sentences, who unlawfully arrested, tried, or imprisoned such prisoners upon such civil charges, was himself liable to criminal justice."

A "Stupendous Illegality."

Mr. Thomas Shaw, K.C., M.P., speaking at Galashiels, after referring to breaches of the rules of warfare agreed upon by civilised nations, said we had stepped from illegality to illegality in South Africa. But

"the most stupendous of all was the proclamation of martial law over Cape Colony, and this at the hands of the Executive, and without the sanction of either the Imperial or the local Legislature. Every student of constitutional law knew that under cover of martial law so set up without legislative sanction every arrest was a wrongful arrest, every imprisonment was a false imprisonment, every seizure of property was legally a robbery or theft, and every execution a murder."

Another eminent lawyer, Mr. R. K. Cherry, K.C., writing to the *Daily News* of October 12th, pushes the opinion still farther by raising the question whether members of the tribunals which have been trying, convicting, and executing rebels, without any authority either from the Imperial or the Cape Parliament, are not liable to be indicted for murder. After quoting Dicey's "Law of the Constitution" to the effect that the military have no right under the law to inflict punishment for riot or rebellion, and that any execution inflicted by a court martial is illegal, and technically murder, Mr. Cherry proceeds:—

"If this statement of the law is correct—and there is no reason whatsoever to doubt it—not only are the various tribunals now administering so-called justice under martial law in Cape Colony as illegal and unconstitutional as the various Committees which sat in Paris during the Terror, but everyone who takes part in the so-called trial of a rebel, everyone who in any way assists in carrying out the sentence of death passed upon a rebel, is guilty of murder. If put on trial on their return to England, a judge would be bound to direct a jury to convict them of murder, and a jury, unless they disregard their oaths, could not acquit

them. The Constitution has frequently been suspended in Ireland during the last century, but never without the authority of Parliament, never by the mere proclamation of the Executive, as in this case."

(The question whether martial law is illegal under Roman-Dutch law just as under the laws of England seems to be settled by the fact that, as one of the military officers concerned testifies, after the term of martial law in Pretoria in 1880-1 an Act of Indemnification was passed in the local Legislature, Colonel H. B. Hanna, who was for some years Deputy Judge-Advocate in India, has also written to the *Daily News* (October 16th) supporting the foregoing opinions as to the illegality of martial law unless formally established by the Legislature by quotations from the "Manual of Military Law," by Lord Thring, then Parliamentary Counsel. From this it seems clear that the execution by court-martial of any person not specifically subject to military law is illegal, and any officer taking part in such mock-trial, or any person carrying out the sentence, is guilty of murder, and would have to be convicted if put on trial on their return to this country.)

"Insensate Inhumanity."

It is weary work protesting against the lawlessness of war-makers. We may find our task easier when South African conditions begin to re-act decisively, as they will some day, upon life in this country. For, as Mr. Frederic Harrison says:—

"Where is anarchy going to stop when once proclaimed on British soil? If law is to be abolished in South Africa by a single Minister in his orchid-house, while his colleagues are playing golf or amusing themselves at Monte Carlo, why may it not be abolished the next day in Australia or in Canada by some Minister; or even in Ireland, Scotland, or England? On what is the Throne, the House of Lords, or Parliament, or civil government to be based hereafter if the most venerable conditions of British freedom are to be trampled upon because our soldiers could not get the better of 50,000 Dutch farmers?"

This is, however, more than a question of law, deep as that consideration goes. And, again, I will rely for a statement of that yet weightier matter, not upon any politician, still less upon sentiment of my own, but upon the solemn words of a man who is as much further than Dr. Doyle beyond ordinary prejudice as he is a greater master of his own art. Our greatest living prose

writer, Mr. George Meredith, wrote thus on February 24th last to the *Daily News*:—

“One who is neither for the Boer nor against him, and who thinks that the case of each party in the South African conflict has not yet been fully stated, claims a short space in your columns to join his voice with those now crying for the discarded ‘quality of mercy.’ It is England’s good name that interests me. I remember the days before the now well-beloved Emperor Franz Josef was taught by sharp experience the virtue residing in benevolent acts, when Austria was denounced by our country from end to end for the ruthless hangings and shootings of rebels. Italians and Hungarians, free of their yoke, remember our sympathy of that clouded time. They are amazed to see this England guilty of the *fruitless butcheries* which dealt their recoil blow upon Imperial Austria. *Such insensate humanity must be stopped*, or Englishmen will have to learn that apathy in the season of evil deeds is not only a crime, but *perceptibly written by history as the cause of national disaster.*”

Negotiations—Another Grave Misrepresentation.

One more point and my task is completed. Dr. Doyle’s chapter on “The Negotiations for Peace” contains two misrepresentations, one of minor and one of major importance. (Dealing with the first months of the war, he says it “is admitted and beyond dispute” that “every yard of British territory which was occupied was instantly annexed either by the Transvaal or by the Orange Free State.” The reported notices of annexation were certainly denied, and, so far as I know, have never been proved. After reporting, five days previously, that the country north of the Vaal had been annexed by President Steyn, Sir Alfred Milner telegraphed to Mr. Chamberlain on October 28th: “It is impossible accurately to find out what has happened as regards the alleged annexation by the Government of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State of portions of the Cape Colony” [Cd. 43, No. 40]. Later on, he said he had not received copies of the alleged proclamation. In November, Mr. Schreiner telegraphed on the subject to Mr. Steyn, who replied indignantly denying that the territory in question had been annexed.

The other misrepresentation is of a more serious nature. It will be remembered that at the meeting with General Botha on February 28th, 1901, Lord Kitchener said from the first that independence could not be discussed. “Botha showed very good feeling and seemed anxious to bring about

peace." He promised to submit Lord Kitchener's points "to his Government and people, and if they agreed, he should visit Orange River Colony and get them to agree." Lord Kitchener's terms were then referred to Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain, both of whom whittled them down in important particulars, especially that of amnesty. The revised terms were put by letter to Botha, who replied:—

"After the mutual exchange of views at our interview at Middelburg on 28th February last, it will certainly not surprise Your Excellency to know that I do not feel disposed to recommend that the terms of the said letter shall have the earnest consideration of my Government."

It is perfectly clear—and so far as I know it has never till now been questioned—that the negotiations broke down over the differences between Lord Kitchener's original terms and Mr. Chamberlain's harsher demands. Yet Dr. Doyle commits himself to this astounding comment:—

"It will be observed that in this reply Botha bases his refusal upon his own views as expressed in the original interview with Kitchener; and we have his own authority, therefore, to show that they were not determined by any changes which Chamberlain may have made in the terms—a favourite charge of that gentleman's enemies."

It is hard to restrain one's pen in face of advocacy of this kind.

"Unconditional Surrender."

Dr. Doyle quotes some of the despatches "to prove how false it is that the British Government has insisted upon an *unconditional surrender*. . . . Nothing has been refused the enemy save only independence." By one of the accidents which constantly happened to him in writing this pamphlet, Dr. Doyle altogether overlooked one set of negotiations which give us a perfectly sharp, clear unmistakable answer to this statement. On June 2nd, 1900, General Buller and General Botha met on the Natal border.

"I told him [says Buller—Cd. 458] my terms were that his men should surrender all guns and return to their farms, and if they did that they could take their rifles with them, subject to the understanding that Lord Roberts will later, probably, order their disarmament. . . . I said that to talk about independence was nonsense; if hereafter they behaved themselves they might become an independent colony, that was the only chance they had. I think they are inclined to give in, and that I have in front of me about half the Transvaal forces now in the field."

Buller reported this to Lord Roberts, who replied peremptorily :—

My terms with the Transvaal Government are Unconditional Surrender.

In the Address debate of last year, Lord Salisbury declared in the Lords that "unless we are masters and conquerors there is no hope," while Mr. Balfour's formula in the Commons was "absolute, complete conquest and control." The Commander-in-Chief put into the two plainest possible words what has been the real demand of the Minister who afterwards spoke of the war as a feather in his cap ever since he espoused the Rhodesian cause.

The Issue for Imperial England.

If I were dealing here with Dr. Conan Doyle as a politician, I should have to consider his advice that the exiled burghers should not be returned to South Africa, except under some undefined "guarantee"—though our Convention obligations here again are clearly defined—his advice that the Boer language should be suppressed, and the phrases of insult and menace which he levels against the peoples of Continental Europe, especially Germany, in his concluding pages. These things answer themselves; while on the scores of points of fact which I have laboriously dealt with one by one, thousands of innocent readers will be deceived.

We may leave Dr. Doyle to his conscience, and Mr. Chamberlain to the destiny that awaits Imperial adventurers. But what is to come upon this British people who are so easily cajoled, who rise like simple fish to the cheapest Jingo bait, who bear with equal stolidity their daily burdens, and the loads of obloquy that their masters heap upon them? They stand before the world responsible for the welfare of an empire whose peoples outnumber them by ten to one and cover one-quarter of the habitable globe. To justify their Imperial pretensions they would have to show that they possess individually and collectively the wisest political spirit, the purest aims, the strongest economic base and administrative equipment to be found in the history of human societies. Some of us, not without grave consideration, have con-

cluded that the task is, even on this favourable hypothesis, an impossible one, that our "white man's burden" is just the modern analogue of the stone of Sisyphus. But if our Sisyphus is to be the easy dupe of millionaire plotters, statesmen abandoned to the most sordid ambitions, and newspapers without scruple or responsibility, the end must come even more rapidly than the precedents of Babylon and Egypt, Carthage and Rome would indicate as probable. Three years ago it was easy to laugh at "Little Englandism." To-day the scoffer and the braggart may well be dumb before the spectacle of the hospitals, and cemeteries, and prisons of South Africa, the broad fields sown now not with the food of peace, but with the tares of hatred; before the spectacle of the mounting debt and the declining trade and dying prestige of our fatherland. The future is very dark; all we can say with certainty is that the sole hope for England rests in something which is greater than England herself, which is within the reach of all the sons of men—desire of truth in the first place, and then faith in operative reason and magnanimity, whose minister is Peace.

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